

THE
INDIAN STRUGGLE
1935-1942



The Writer, in Berlin, 1942.

THE
INDIAN STRUGGLE
1935-1942

by
SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

1952

CHUCKERVERTY, CHATTERJEE
& COMPANY, LIMITED
15, COLLEGE SQUARE, CALCUTTA-12

Published by
M. L. CHAKRAVARTI,
Chuckervetty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd.
15, College Square, Calcutta-12.

All rights, including right of translation, reserved.

Printer : P. C. RAY
SRI GOURANGA PRESS
5, Chintamani Das Lane, Calcutta.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It is our unique privilege to present to the people of India and friends of India abroad an account of **THE INDIAN STRUGGLE 1935-1942** by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. We should first like to convey our grateful thanks to his worthy wife who assisted him in the preparation of this record and through whose kindness this publication has become possible.

Any commentary on the book is superfluous. It is a continuation of Netaji's **INDIAN STRUGGLE 1920-1934**, first published in 1935 in England and now available in India. The present book takes the reader through the most critical and concluding phases of India's battle for freedom and gives us the opportunity to read and learn history in company with the Leader of Indian Revolution. What is more, it gives us also a glimpse of the future.

This book, like its predecessor, was written in Europe. Immediately on his arrival in Germany in April, 1941, after his historic escape from India, Netaji threw himself into the work of building up the Azad Hind movement abroad. After the foundations of the movement had been laid, Netaji retired in September, 1941, for a short rest and change to Badgastein in Austria where the present work started taking shape. He continued to work on it intermittently in the midst of a strenuous and hectic life till February 1943, when he left Europe on a hazardous voyage to take over the leadership of the Indian liberation movement in East Asia.

For the sake of completeness and in order to help the reader to have a comprehensive view and understanding of Netaji's political philosophy, we have included as appendices three of his outstanding writings. The first, "The Struggle and After", hitherto unpublished in India, was

his Presidential address at the Indian Political Conference held in London in 1933. The second, 'Forward Bloc—its justification', also so far unpublished in India, was written in Kabul in February—March, 1941, and sent through a special courier to the late Sri Sarat Chandra Bose. The third is the last of Netaji's speeches on Fundamental Problems of India, delivered at the Tokyo University in 1944.

We feel confident that this publication will have a warm welcome from the reading public both in India and abroad and will lead to a real and complete understanding of the nature, course and meaning of the Indian freedom movement. Jai Hind.

Calcutta,
the 9th August, 1952.

CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER I	
INDIA SINCE 1857—A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW	1
CHAPTER II	
FROM JANUARY, 1935, Till SEPTEMBER, 1939	8
CHAPTER III	
FROM SEPTEMBER, 1939, Till AUGUST, 1942	28
APPENDICES:	
I. THE STRUGGLE AND AFTER	49
II. FORWARD BLOC—ITS JUSTIFICATION .. , ...	77
III. THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF INDIA	103

CHAPTER I*

INDIA SINCE 1857—A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

THOUGH the British conquest of India began in 1757 with the Battle of Plassey and the overthrow of the then independent King of Bengal, Nawab Sirajudowla, it was only by slow and gradual stages that the British occupation of India made progress. For instance, after the Battle of Plassey, only the financial administration of Bengal passed into the hands of the British—the political administration remaining in the hands of Nawab Mir Jaffar, the man who had betrayed Nawab Sirajudowla at the last moment and gone over to the British. It was only by stages that the British could take over the entire administration of Bengal. Likewise it was only by slow and gradual stages that the British rule could be extended over other parts of India. While this process of gradual annexation was going on, the British still formally recognised the suzerainty of the Emperor at Delhi. It should be noted that in the occupation of India, the British used not only arms—but more than arms, the weapons of bribery, treachery and every form of corruption. For instance, the founder of the British Empire in India, Robert Clive, who was later made a Lord, has been proved by historians to have been guilty of forgery. Likewise Warren Hastings, a Governor-General of India, was accused before the British Parliament by Edmund Burke, a member of the House of Commons, as being guilty of “high crimes and misdemeanours”.✓

The greatest folly and mistake of our predecessors was their inability to realise at the very beginning, the real

* The preceding pages were written in English in the original in 1934 and deal with the period upto 1934. The following pages were written in 1943 and bring the book up to date—Writer.†

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

character and role of the Britishers who came to India. They probably thought that like the innumerable tribes that had wandered to India in the past and had made India their home, the British were just another such tribe. It was much later that they realised that the British had come to conquer and plunder and not to settle down in India. As soon as this was generally understood all over the country, a mighty revolution broke out in 1857, which has been incorrectly called by English historians "the Sepoy Mutiny", but which is regarded by the Indian people as the First War of Independence. In the Great Revolution of 1857, the British were on the point of being thrown out of the country—but partly through superior strategy and partly through luck—they won at the end. Then there followed a reign of terror, the parallel of which it is difficult to find in history. Wholesale massacres took place in the course of which innocent men were bound hand and foot and were blown up from the mouths of cannon.

After the Revolution of 1857, the British realised that by sheer brutal force, they could not hold India long. They, therefore, proceeded to disarm the country. And the second greatest folly and mistake that our predecessors committed was to submit to disarmament. If they had not given up their arms so easily, probably the history of India since 1857 would have been different from what it has been. Having once disarmed the country completely, it has been possible for the British to hold India with the help of a small but efficient modern army.

Along with disarmament, the newly established British Government, now controlled directly from London, commenced its policy of "divide and rule". This policy has been the fundamental basis of British rule from 1858 till today. After 1857, for nearly forty years, the policy was to keep India divided, by putting three-fourths of the people directly under British control and the remaining one-fourth

India Since 1857—A Bird's Eye View

under the Indian Princes. Simultaneously, the British Government showed a great deal of partiality for the big landlords in British India. It is interesting to note, in this connection, the attitude of the British Government towards the Indian Princes since 1857. Up to 1857, the policy of the British was to get rid of the Princes, wherever possible, and take over the direct administration of their states. In the revolution of 1857, though a number of Indian rulers—e.g. the famous and heroic Rani (Queen) of Jhansi—fought against the British, many remained neutral or actively sided with them. Among the latter was the Maharaja of Nepal. It then occurred to the British for the first time that it would perhaps be advisable not to disturb the existing Princes, but to make a treaty of alliance and friendship with them, so that in the event of there being trouble for the British, the Princes would come to their aid. The present British policy of partiality towards the Indian Princes goes back, therefore, to the year 1857. By the beginning of the present century the British realised, however, that they could no longer dominate India by simply playing the princes and the big landlords against the people. Then they discovered the Muslim problem in the year 1906, when Lord Minto¹ was the Viceroy. Prior to this, there was no such problem in India. In the great Revolution of 1857, Hindus and Muslims had fought side by side against the British and it was under the flag of Bahadur Shah, a Muslim, that India's First War of Independence had been fought.

During the last World War, when the British found that further political concessions would have to be made to the Indian people, they realised that it was not enough to try and divide the Muslims from the rest of the population

¹ Lord Morley, who was the Secretary of State for India in the British Cabinet when Lord Minto was the Viceroy of India, stated that Lord Minto "had started the Moslem Hare" in 1906.

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

and they then set about trying to divide the Hindus themselves. In this way, they discovered the caste problem in 1918 and suddenly became the champions and liberators of the so-called depressed classes. Till the year 1937, Britain had hoped to keep India divided by posing as the champions of the Princes, the Muslims, and the so-called depressed classes. In the general election held under the new constitution of 1935—they found, however, to their great surprise, that all their tricks and bluffs had failed and that a strong nationalist feeling permeated the whole nation and every section of it. Consequently, British policy has now fallen back on its last hope. If the Indian people cannot be divided, then the country—India—has to be divided geographically and politically. This is the plan, called Pakistan, which emanated from the fertile brain of a Britisher and which has precedents in other parts of the British Empire. For instance, Ceylon which belonged geographically and culturally to India, was separated from India long ago. Immediately after the last war, Ireland which was always a unified state, was divided into Ulster and the Irish Free State. After the new constitution of 1935, Burma was separated from India. And if the present war had not intervened, Palestine would already have been divided into a Jewish State, an Arab State, and a British corridor running between the two. Having themselves invented Pakistan—or the plan for dividing India—the British have been doing a colossal, but skilful, propaganda in support of it. Though the vast majority of the Indian Muslims want a free and independent India—though the President of the Indian National Congress is Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, a Muslim—and though only a minority of the Indian Muslims supports the idea of Pakistan—British propaganda throughout the world gives the impression that the Indian Muslims are not behind the national struggle for liberty and want India to be divided up. The British

India Since 1857—A Bird's Eye View

themselves know that what they propagate is quite false—but they, nevertheless, hope that by repeating a falsehood, again and again, they will be able to make the world believe it. When Pakistan was originally invented, the idea was to divide India in a so-called Hindu India and a so-called Muslim India, however fantastic the plan might have been. Since then the fertile brains of the Britishers have developed the plan still further and if they could have their own way, they would now divide India not into two states, but into five or six. For instance, British politicians say that if the Indian Princes want to secede from the rest of India, they should have a separate state called Rajasthan. If the Sikhs want to secede, they should also have a separate state called Khalsistan. And these cunning Britishers are showing special solicitude for the Pathans—that section of the Indian Muslims living in the North-West of India—and they are urging that there should be a separate state in the North-West of India, called Pathanistan. Pathanistan seems to be the hot favourite of British politicians at the present moment. They hope that through this plan of Pathanistan they would win over some of the most troublesome people in India—namely, the people of the North-West Frontier Province of India and the independent tribes living between India and Afghanistan—and at the same time, get the sympathy of the Afghan people.

Pakistan is, of course, a fantastic plan and an unpractical proposition—for more reasons than one. India is geographically, historically, culturally, politically and economically an indivisible unit. Secondly, in most parts of India, Hindus and Muslims are so mixed up that it is not possible to separate them. Thirdly, if Muslim states were forcibly set up, new minority problems would be created in these states which would present new difficulties. Fourthly, unless Hindus and Muslims join hands and fight the British, they cannot liberate themselves and their unity is possible only

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

on the basis of a free and undivided India. An independent Pakistan is an impossibility and Pakistan, therefore, means in practice, dividing India in order to ensure British domination for all. It is noteworthy that in his latest utterances, Mr Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, and a champion of Pakistan, has acknowledged that the creation and maintenance of Pakistan is possible only with the help of the British.

Now to resume our story. The struggle that is now going on in India is, in reality, a continuation of the Great Revolution of 1857. In the last four decades of the nineteenth century, the Indian movement expressed itself in agitation in the press and on the platform. This movement was crystallised into one organisation when the Indian National Congress was inaugurated in 1885. The beginning of this century saw a new awakening in India and along with it, new methods of struggle were devised. Thus, during the first two decades, we see the economic boycott of British goods, on the one side, and revolutionary terrorism on the other. The Indian revolutionaries made a desperate attempt to overthrow British rule with the help of arms during the last war—at a time when Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey were fighting our enemy—but they, the Indian revolutionaries, were crushed. After the war, India needed a new weapon of struggle—and at this psychological moment, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with his method of Satyagraha or passive resistance or civil disobedience. //

During the last twenty-two years, the Congress under the Mahatma's leadership has built up a powerful organisation all over the country—including the states of the Princes. It has awakened political life in the remotest villages and among all sections of the people. Most important of all is the fact that the masses of India have learnt how to strike at the powerful enemy even without arms, and

India Since 1857—A Bird's Eye View

the Congress, under Gandhi's leadership, has demonstrated that it is possible to paralyse the administration through the weapon of passive resistance. In short, India has now a disciplined political organisation reaching the remotest villages with which a national struggle can be conducted and with the help of which—a new, independent state can be, later on, built up.

The younger generation in India has, however, learnt from the last twenty years' experience that while passive resistance can hold up or paralyse a foreign administration—it cannot overthrow or expel it, without the use of physical force. Impelled by this experience, the people today are spontaneously passing on from passive to active resistance. And that is why you read and hear today of the unarmed Indian people destroying railway, telegraph and telephone communications—setting fire to police stations, post-offices, and Government buildings, and using force in many other ways in order to overthrow the British yoke. The last stage will come when active resistance will develop into an armed revolution. Then will come the end of British rule in India.

CHAPTER II

FROM JANUARY, 1935, TILL SEPTEMBER, 1939

AT the end of November, 1934, immediately after finishing the original book in English, the writer flew to India, on receipt of a cablegram from his mother saying that his father was on his deathbed. He arrived in Calcutta one day late. At the aerodrome he was received by a strong posse of police who put him under arrest. In his house, which was then in a state of mourning, he was interned for six weeks, until he left for Europe to resume his medical treatment.

During his stay in India, the writer found that the main topic of discussion was the recent elections to the Indian Legislative Assembly, India's Parliament. Contrary to the expectations of the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, the Congress Party had remarkable success at the polls. It was clear that despite the repressive measures employed by Lord Willingdon's Government against the Congress Party from 1932 onwards, the vast majority of the people stood behind the Indian National Congress. It should be noted here that, unlike 1923-24, the parliamentary activity of the Congress was this time conducted by the Gandhi Wing.

The President of the Congress for the next twelve months in 1935 was Mr. Rajendra Prasad, an orthodox follower of Mahatma Gandhi, who was expected to adhere to the Gandhian line strictly.

The most important political event during 1935, was the passing of a new constitution for India by the British Parliament, called the Government of India Act, 1935. This constitution was brought into operation two years later—in 1937—when the first elections were held. It is

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

theoretically still in force, though actually suspended since the outbreak of the present war, in September 1939. The new constitution was unanimously rejected by Indian public opinion and, in particular, by the Congress,—because it was a scheme, not for self-government, but for maintaining British rule in the new political conditions, through the help of the Indian Princes and sectarian, reactionary and pro-British organisations.

The provisions of the 1935 Constitution consisted of two parts, the Federal and Provincial. The proposed “Federation” was a new departure in that it provided for an all-India Central Government uniting both “British India” and the “Indian States”. The federal chamber was to consist of two houses, in which the princes were to nominate two-fifths and one-third of the members respectively. Elaborate weighting governed the choice of elected members. Seats were allocated to prescribed groups, Moslems, Sikhs, Scheduled-Castes, Women, Anglo-Indians, Labour etc. In the Upper House, only 75 out of 260 seats were open to general election; in the Lower House, only 86 out of 375. In the Upper House the electorate was restricted to about 0·05 of the population of British India; in the Lower, it was about one-ninth. The powers of these legislatures were extremely limited. Defence and foreign policy were reserved for the Viceroy; financial policy and control of bureaucracy and police was also excluded from the competence of the Assemblies. No legislation could be passed on certain prescribed topics. The Viceroy had wide discretionary powers including the right to veto any legislation, dismiss Ministers, pass legislation rejected by the legislatures, dissolve the legislatures and suspend the constitution.

The provincial section of the constitution, applicable only to the eleven provinces of British India, was somewhat less narrow. There were no appointees of the Princes. The

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

legislatures were wholly elected, though the franchise for the Upper House was restricted. There were no reserved topics except that the Secret Police was under the control of the Governor, who also had full emergency powers, if he thought the "tranquillity of the province is endangered". The provinces thus offered some limited possibilities for popular government. The seats on the Assemblies were allocated to communal groups as at the centre, but 657 "general seats" were left open out of the 1585 in the eleven provinces. It was therefore possible for the National Congress while opposing the constitution, to participate in the first provincial elections in 1937, in which it won majorities in seven (later eight) out of eleven provinces. ✓

As already anticipated at the end of chapter XIV of "The Indian Struggle 1920-34" nothing sensational happened in India during the years 1935 and 1936. The parliamentary wing of the Congress continued its activity and began slowly to gain in influence. On the other hand, the Congress Socialist Party began to rally the younger generation and also the more radical elements inside the Congress and among the Indian people in general. For the time being, both Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience and revolutionary terrorism had lost their charm and in the vacuum created thereby, the Congress Socialist Party naturally made headway. The Communist Party of India, a small group which had been declared illegal by the British Government, instructed its members to join the Congress Socialist Party and thereby use the public platform of the Congress Socialist Party, in order to push forward its own organisation and objective. It did succeed in extending its influence among a section of the students and factory workers. Later on, the Communist Party took the name of "National Front", in order to function publicly. ✓✓

The Congress Socialist Party had the historic opportunity to throw up an alternative leadership, in place of the

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

Gandhian leadership which had monopolised the political field since 1920. This development would have been easier, if Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who gave his moral support to that party, had openly joined it and accepted its leadership. But he did not do so.

In the autumn of 1935, Pandit Nehru was suddenly released from prison in order to enable him to join his wife who was on her death-bed in Europe. He spent most of his time in Badenweiler in Germany, visiting London and Paris from time to time. During this visit to Europe, which terminated in March, 1936, he made contacts in London and in Paris which were to influence his future policy. He did not visit such countries as Russia or Ireland which were then regarded as anti-British, though during his previous tour in Europe, he had gone to Moscow. In countries like Italy and Germany, he carefully avoided making any contacts, either because of his dislike of Fascism and National Socialism, or because he did not want to offend his friends in England and France. During his stay in Europe, he published his Autobiography which made him tremendously popular with the liberal section of the English public.

In 1936, Nehru was elected President of the Indian National Congress and he presided over its annual session held at Lucknow in April. He was re-elected President at the end of the year and he presided over the next annual session held at Faizpur in Bombay Presidency. In the Presidential election, Nehru had the full support of the Gandhian Wing of the Congress on both occasions. As President, he held a middle position between the Gandhian Wing and the Congress Socialist Party—causing no annoyance to either, but giving a certain measure of moral support to the latter.

Between 1933 and 1936, the writer toured practically the whole of Europe outside Russia and studied at first hand the conditions of post-Versailles Europe. He was several

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

times in Italy and in Germany, and in Rome he was received by Signor Mussolini on several occasions. He studied, on the one hand, the growth of the new forces that were ultimately to challenge the old order that had been set up by the Treaty of Versailles—and on the other, he studied the League of Nations which symbolised that old order. He was specially interested in the changes that had been brought about by the Treaty of Versailles and, for that purpose, he made it a point to visit Austria-Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Balkans. Through travel and study, he was able, not only to understand the situation in Europe at the time, but also to have a glimpse of coming events. In many countries in Europe, he was able to rouse interest in India and to help in founding organisations for developing contact with India. The tour concluded with a visit to Ireland, where he met President De Valera and other Ministers of his Government, as well as the leaders of the republican movement.

The writer spent a part of his time in Geneva in 1933 and 1934 with a view to studying the organisation of the League of Nations and exploring the possibility of utilising the League for advancing the cause of India's freedom. This was also the aim of the veteran nationalist leader, Mr. V. J. Patel, ex-President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, who had come to Geneva for that purpose. Unfortunately, Mr. Patel¹ was taken ill immediately after his arrival and he died in a Swiss Sanatorium in October, 1933. After his death, the writer was left alone but he continued his work in Geneva for some time. During this period, he worked in collaboration with the International Committee on India which had its headquarters in Geneva and he helped in the publication of a monthly bulletin on

¹ Mr. Patel was one of the few Indian leaders interested in foreign propaganda. He was responsible for founding the Indo-Irish League in Dublin.

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

India. This bulletin was published in three languages—French, German, and English—and was sent all over the world to people interested in India. Towards the end of his stay in Geneva, the writer realised that the machinery of the League of Nations was controlled fully by Britain and France and that it was impossible to utilise the League for India's liberty, though India was an original member of that body. Thereupon, he started an agitation to the effect that India was wasting her money by remaining a member of the League and that she should resign from that body as soon as possible. This agitation found wide support among the Indian public.

• During his stay in Europe, the writer was everywhere watched and followed by the agents of the British Government who tried their best to prevent his making contacts with different governments and with important personalities in different countries. In Fascist or pro-Fascist countries, the British agents tried to paint him as a Communist. In Socialist or democratic countries, on the other hand, they tried to describe him as a Fascist. In spite of these obstacles, however, he was able to do useful propaganda for India and rouse sympathy for the Indian freedom movement in several countries in Europe. In some of these countries, organisations were started for developing cultural and economic contact with India. *JJ*

In April, 1936, the writer returned to Bombay with the intention of attending the Lucknow session of the Congress. He had been warned in writing by the British Government through the British Consul in Vienna that he would be arrested if he returned to India, but in a spirited reply, he had rejected that warning, challenging the Government to do its worst. He was taken to prison at Bombay, the moment he set foot on Indian soil.

In the autumn of 1936, Mr. M. N. Roy, formerly of the Communist International, was released from prison after

serving a term of six years in connection with Bolshevik Conspiracy Case at Cawnpore. Because of his revolutionary past and his international experience, Mr. M. N. Roy was a popular and attractive figure, with a halo round his name. Youngmen flocked to him and very soon a new group, called the Roy group, came into public limelight.

The New Constitution for India which brought about the separation of Burma from India had been passed by the British Parliament in 1935. This gave the Indian people a certain measure of autonomy in the Provinces. Provincial elections under the new Constitution were to be held in the winter of 1936-37. The Parliamentary Wing of the Congress (which was now synonymous with the Gandhian Wing) began to prepare for these elections and also for the acceptance of ministerial office, thereafter, in the provinces. The Congress Socialist Party had originally opposed participation in these elections—an attitude which was reminiscent of the attitude of the orthodox Gandhiite “no-change party” in 1922-23. Later on, the C. S. Party modified its attitude and supported the idea of contesting the elections, but strongly opposed the idea of accepting ministerial office. The C. S. P. did not have a clear revolutionary perspective and this was probably due to the fact that in the ranks of that Party, there were disillusioned ex-Gandhiites who were, however, still under the influence of Gandhian concepts—while there were others in the Party who were under the influence of Nehru’s sentimental politics.

In 1936-37, the C. S. Party sponsored an “Anti-Ministry” movement with the objective of opposing the acceptance of ministerial office by Congressmen. Among those who supported this move, but were not members of the C.S.P, were Sardar Sardul Singh Cavesheer of Punjab¹, Rafi Ahmed

¹ Cavesheer later became the Vice-President of the All-India Forward Bloc.

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

Kidwai¹, of the United Provinces, Mrs. V. L. Pandit² and Sarat Chandra Bose³ (brother of the writer). Pandit Nehru gave his moral support to the movement. JJ

In spite of all the checks and safeguards provided in the New Constitution for preventing the Nationalists from getting a majority, the Congress Party emerged from the provincial parliamentary elections with a practical majority in seven out of eleven provinces in British India. At that time, the anti-ministry movement was going strong—but the Parliamentarian (or Gandhian) leaders of the Congress handled the situation with such consummate skill, that in July, 1937, they successfully torpedoed the anti-ministry movement and got the All India Congress Committee to decide in favour of taking Cabinet office in the provinces.

The writer was released from internment from a Calcutta hospital in March, 1937, after the parliamentary elections were over. Within the next few months, the majority of political prisoners were gradually set at liberty, with the exception of those in Bengal and in the Andaman Islands. The political prisoners in Bengal numbered several thousands, the majority of whom had been imprisoned or interned without any trial whatsoever. There were also a few hundred political prisoners in the Andaman Islands—the penal settlement in the Bay of Bengal, who had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and they were mostly from Bengal, Punjab and the United Provinces. In July, 1937, the Congress Party took Cabinet-office in seven out of eleven provinces, and in these provinces, practically all the political prisoners were released. Soon after this, the political prisoners in the Andaman Islands went on hunger-

¹ Kidwai later became the Home Minister of the Congress Cabinet in U.P.

² Mrs. Pandit also became a Minister in U.P.

³ Bose became later the leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Legislature.

strike, demanding their release, whereupon they were brought over to prisons in the mainland.

The seven provinces which had a Congress Cabinet were—Frontier Province, United Provinces, Bihar, Bombay Presidency, Central Provinces, Madras Presidency and Orissa. Assam had a Congress Cabinet in September, 1938, after the first Cabinet was thrown out. Sindh¹ has had a Cabinet supported by the Congress Party, without participating in it. In Bengal², since December, 1941, there has been a new Cabinet with the Congress Party participating in it. Only in Punjab, has the Ministry of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan been always in opposition to the Congress Party.

After the Congress Party took office in seven provinces,—the administration there became distinctly nationalist in character and the prestige of the Congress went up by leaps and bounds. People in general had the feeling that the Congress was the coming power. But apart from this, there was no remarkable change. Power still remained in the hands of the Provincial Governor and of the permanent officials of the Indian Civil Service, the majority of whom were British, and the Congress Party could not therefore undertake far-reaching reforms in the administration. After some time, it could be noticed that a large section of Congressmen was gradually being infected with the parliamentary or constitutionalist mentality and was losing its revolutionary fervour.

The emergence of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 was a sure indication of the resurgence of the radical or left-wing forces in the country. This was accompanied by

¹ The pro-Congress Premier of Sindh, Mr. Allah Buksh, resigned his post in October, 1942, as a protest against the repressive policy of the British Government in India and also gave up the title of "Khan Bahadur" which he had received from the British Government.

² It is reported that the Ministers belonging to the Congress Party were unconstitutionally removed from the Cabinet by the British Governor of the province a few months ago, on the ground that they were secretly in league with the "Forward Bloc".

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

a phenomenal awakening among the peasantry and the students, and to some extent, among the workers. For the first time, there emerged a centralised All India Peasants' Organisation, called the All India Kisan Sabha, the most prominent leader of which was Swami Sahajananda Saraswati. The students' movement also, which had gone through many ups and downs in the past, was centralised under the leadership of the All India Students' Federation¹. The All India Trade Union Congress, which had experienced two successive splits—in 1929 at Nagpur and again in 1931 at Calcutta—was once again unified under a joint leadership representing all shades of opinion, both Right and Left. In the literary world, too, there was an attempt to organise the progressive writers. *J*

Pandit Nehru's Presidentship for two terms was marked by energy and initiative at the top and gave a fillip to the radical forces in the Congress, while, at his instance a number of socialists were employed as permanent Congress officials. But Pandit Nehru could have achieved much more. The years 1936-37 represented the high-water mark of his popularity and in a certain sense, his position was then stronger than that of Mahatma Gandhi, because he had the support of the entire Left, which Gandhi had not. But the Mahatma's position was organisationally very strong, for he had built up a party of his own, the Gandhi Wing, within the Congress Party, and with the help of the former he could dominate the latter. Nehru, on the other hand, in spite of his tremendous popularity, did not have a party of his own. There were two courses open to him, if he wanted to live in history—either to accept the tenets of Gandhism and join the Gandhi Wing within the Congress

¹ A split in the All-India Student's Federation occurred at Nagpur, in December, 1940. The Communist group in the Federation seceded and set up a separate organisation. The main body of students now follows the political lead of the Forward Bloc.

Party, or to build up his own party in opposition to the Gandhi Wing. He could not do the former, because though he was personally loyal to the Mahatma, he did not accept all the tenets of Gandhism. On the other hand, he did not build up his own party, because that would have given offence to the Gandhi Wing, and he has never in his own life had the courage to do anything in opposition to the Mahatma. Thus, Nehru began to drift along, trying to please both the Right and the Left—without joining either the Gandhi Wing or any other radical party—and thus remaining in effect, a lone figure within the Congress Party. That is his position today—in December, 1942. After 1937, he moved closer to Gandhi, till in 1939, he almost became a member of the Gandhi Wing. For this, he was rewarded by the Mahatma, when the latter announced in January, 1942, that he was appointing Nehru as his successor. If Nehru had given unquestioning obedience to Gandhi, he would have remained in that position. But over the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps to India and the problem of the future relations between India and Britain, Nehru advocated a policy of compromise and collaboration, which was repudiated by the Mahatma and his party. As a result of this difference of opinion, Nehru now stands virtually alone and it is highly probable that after this experience, the Gandhi Wing will not easily accept Nehru as leader in succession to the Mahatma.

In December, 1937, the writer paid another visit to his favourite health-resort, Badgastein, in Austria, and from there he visited England. While in England, in January, 1938, he received news that he had been unanimously elected President of the Congress. During the course of this visit, he met members of the British Cabinet, like Lord Halifax and Lord Zetland, as well as prominent members of the Labour and Liberal Parties who then professed sympathy for India, e.g. Mr. Attlee, Mr. Arthur Greenwood,

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

Mr. Bevin, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Harold Laski, Lord Allen etc.

As Congress President, the writer did his best to stiffen the opposition of the Congress Party to any compromise with Britain and this caused annoyance in Gandhian circles who were then looking forward to an understanding with the British Government. Later in the year 1938, he launched the National Planning Committee for drawing up a comprehensive plan of industrialization and of national development. This caused further annoyance to Mahatma Gandhi who was opposed to industrialization. After the Munich Pact, in September, 1938, the writer began an open propaganda throughout India in order to prepare the Indian people for a national struggle, which should synchronise with the coming war in Europe. This move, though popular among the people in general, was resented by the Gandhiites who did not want to be disturbed in their ministerial and parliamentary work and who were at that time opposed to any national struggle.

The breach between the writer and the Gandhi Wing was now wide, though not visible to the public. At the Presidential election in January, 1939, he was therefore vigorously opposed by the Gandhi Wing as well as by Pandit Nehru. Nevertheless, he was victorious with a comfortable majority. This was the first time since 1923-24 that the Mahatma suffered a public defeat and in his weekly paper, Harijan, he openly acknowledged the defeat. The election had served to show the wide and influential following that the writer had, throughout the country, in open opposition to both Gandhi and Nehru.

In March, 1939, at the annual session of the Congress, the writer who presided made a clear proposal that the Indian National Congress should immediately send an ultimatum to the British Government demanding Independence within six months and should simultaneously prepare for a

national struggle. This proposal was opposed by the Gandhi Wing and by Nehru and was thrown out. Thus a situation arose in which though the writer was the President of the Congress, his lead was not accepted by that body. Moreover, it was seen that on every conceivable occasion, the Gandhi Wing was opposing the President with a view to making it impossible for him to function. A complete deadlock within the Congress was the result. There were two ways of removing this deadlock—either the Gandhi Wing should give up its obstructionist policy, or the President should submit to the Gandhi Wing. With a view to finding a possible compromise, direct negotiations between Mahatma Gandhi and the writer took place, but they proved to be abortive. Under the constitution of the Congress, the President was entitled to appoint the Executive (Working Committee) for the coming year, but it was clear that the Gandhi Wing would continue to obstruct, if the Executive was not appointed according to its choice. And the position of the Gandhi Wing within the Congress was such that determined obstruction on its part would render it virtually impossible for the President to function in an independent manner.

The Gandhi Wing was determined neither to accept the lead of the writer, nor to allow him to control the machinery of the Congress, and it would tolerate him only as a puppet President. The Gandhi Wing had, moreover, this tactical advantage that it was the only organised party within the Congress, acting under a centralised leadership. The Left Wing or radical elements in the Congress who were responsible for the writer's re-election as President in January, 1939, were numerically in a majority—but they were at a disadvantage, because they were not organised under one leadership, as the Gandhi Wing was. There was till then, no party or group commanding the confidence of the entire Left Wing. Though at that time the Congress

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

Socialist Party was the most important party in the Left Wing, its influence was limited. Moreover, when the fight between the Gandhi Wing and the writer began, even the Congress Socialist Party began to vacillate. Thus, in the absence of an organised and disciplined Left Wing, it was impossible for the writer to fight the Gandhi Wing. Consequently, India's primary political need in 1939 was an organised and disciplined Left Wing Party in the Congress.

The negotiations between Mahatma Gandhi and the writer revealed that on the one side, the Gandhi Wing would not follow the lead of the writer and that, on the other, the writer would not agree to be a puppet President. There was, consequently, no other alternative but to resign the Presidentship. This the writer did on the 29th April, 1939, and he immediately proceeded to form a radical and progressive party within the Congress, with a view to rallying the entire Left Wing under one banner. This Party was called the Forward Bloc. The first President of the Bloc was the writer and the Vice-President (now acting President) was Sardar Sardul Singh Cavesheer of Punjab.

Long before 1939, the writer had been convinced that an international crisis in the form of a war would break out in the near future and that India should make the fullest use of that crisis in order to win her freedom. Since the Munich Pact—that is, since September, 1938—he had been trying to bring the Indian public round to this point of view and he had been endeavouring to induce the Congress to shape its own policy in conformity with the march of events abroad. In this task, he had been obstructed by the Gandhi Wing at every step—because the latter had no comprehension of coming international developments and was looking forward eagerly to a compromise with Britain without the necessity of a national struggle. Nevertheless, the writer knew that within the Congress and among the people in general, he had a very large measure of support

and that all that he needed was an organised and disciplined Party behind him.

In organising the Forward Bloc, the writer had two expectations. Firstly, in the event of a future conflict with the Gandhi Wing, he would be able to fight more effectively; and further, he could hope to win the entire Congress over to his point of view one day. Secondly, even if he failed to win over the entire Congress to his point of view, he could, in any major crisis, act on his own, even if the Gandhi Wing failed to rise to the occasion. Future developments fulfilled the expectations of the founder of the Forward Bloc to a remarkable degree.

As soon as the Forward Bloc was launched, the full wrath of the Gandhi Wing fell on it. Since the death of Deshbandhu C. R. Das in 1925, this was the first serious challenge to Gandhi's leadership and could not be tolerated by him or by his followers. While facing the frowns of the Gandhi Wing, the Forward Bloc had simultaneously to put up with persecution and harassment at the hands of the British Government, because for the latter, the Forward Bloc was politically much more dangerous than the Gandhi Wing was.

The birth of the Forward Bloc sharpened the internal conflict within the Congress and it was not possible for anybody to avoid taking sides any longer. In this internal crisis the man who was inconvenienced most was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Up till now, he had, with great skill and ingenuity, been able to ride two horses at the same time and had thereby been able to secure the support of the Gandhi Wing, while being a friend or patron of the Left. Challenged by the Forward Bloc, he had to make his choice and he began to move towards the Right—the Gandhi Wing. And as the relations between the Gandhi Wing and the Forward Bloc became strained, Nehru rallied more and more to the support of the Mahatma.

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

The best thing for India would have been for the entire Congress led by the Gandhi Wing to take up the policy advocated by the Forward Bloc. This would have obviated a loss of energy and time caused by internal conflict and would have enhanced the fighting strength of the Congress, vis-a-vis the British Government. But human nature acts under its own laws. Since September, 1938, Mahatma Gandhi had consistently urged that a national struggle was out of the question in the near future, while others, like the writer, who were not less patriotic than him, were equally convinced that the country was internally more ripe for a revolution than ever before and that the coming international crisis would give India an opportunity for achieving her emancipation, which is rare in human history. When all other attempts to influence Gandhi failed, the only way left was to organise the Forward Bloc and proceed to win over the mass of the people and thereby put indirect pressure on the Mahatma. This method ultimately proved to be effective. As a matter of fact, if this had not been done, Gandhi would not have altered his original attitude and would have still remained where he stood on the outbreak of the war in September, 1939.

The writer still remembers clearly the long and interesting discussion which he had with Nehru in Calcutta, in April, 1939, when he announced his desire to resign the Presidentship of the Congress and organise a new party. Nehru argued that such a step would create a split within the Congress and would thereby weaken the national organisation at a critical moment. The writer urged, on the contrary, that one should distinguish between the unity which led to more effective action and the unity which resulted in inaction. Unity could be preserved superficially in the Congress only by surrendering to the Gandhi Wing—but since the Gandhi Wing was opposed to the idea of a national struggle, such unity if maintained,

would serve to stultify all dynamic activity on the part of the Congress in future. If, on the contrary, a party with a dynamic programme was organised within the Congress now, that party might one day move the Gandhi Wing and the entire Congress to militant action. Moreover, more critical times were ahead and a war was bound to break out in the near future. If one wanted to act in such an international crisis, then there should be a party ready to seize that opportunity. If the Gandhi Wing was unwilling to play that role, another party should be formed at once—when there was still time to organise such party. If that task was neglected or postponed, it could not be done later, when the international crisis actually overtook India. And without a well-organised party ready to utilize the coming international crisis for winning freedom, India would once again repeat her mistake of 1914.

This discussion did not, however, convince Nehru and he continued to support the Gandhi Wing. But the more he did so, the more was he isolated from the Left Wing.

It was in September, 1938, that the writer for the first time realised that in the event of an international crisis, Gandhi would not seize the opportunity for attacking the British Government. It was then that he also realised for the first time that Gandhi regarded a struggle with Britain in the near future as outside the domain of possibility. (This estimate of the Indian situation was, however, a purely subjective one—due probably to Gandhi's old age.) In September, 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, the writer was the President of the Congress and he, naturally presided over the meetings of the Congress Working Committee which met in order to decide what steps should be taken if a war actually broke out in Europe at that time. These meetings were in the nature of a rehearsal of the meetings held one year later, in September, 1939, when war actually broke out, and they afforded a clear insight into the menta-

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

lity of Mahatma Gandhi and other important leaders of the Congress.

When in September, 1938, it appeared to the intelligent observer that Mahatma Gandhi, for some reason or other, had lost dynamism and initiative, the following possibilities for developing an alternative leadership existed in India.

(1) Through Pandit Nehru.

As we have already remarked above, Pandit Nehru deliberately neglected this opportunity, largely because of his internal weakness, lack of self-confidence, and lack of revolutionary perspective.

(2) Through M. N. Roy.

M. N. Roy did form a party and did talk of alternative leadership. But there was some defect in his character, owing to which, within a short time, he made more enemies than friends. Nevertheless, he still had a future—but with the outbreak of the present war, he began to advocate unconditional cooperation with the British Government, and that brought about his political doom.

(3) Through the Congress Socialist Party.

Between 1934 and 1938, this party had the best chance of developing as the future national party of India, but it failed. This was anticipated by the writer in Chapter XVIII of "The Indian Struggle 1920-34". The C. S. Party lacked a clear revolutionary perspective from the outset. It began to function more as a parliamentary opposition within the Congress than as the spearhead of a revolutionary movement. After September, 1939, the leaders of this party were won over by Gandhi and Nehru and that blasted the future of the Party.

(4) Through the Communist Party.

When the Congress Socialist Party failed to rise to the occasion, there was an opportunity for the Communist

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

Party—then functioning under the name “National Front”—to come to the forefront. But the Communist Party, besides being numerically small, lacked a proper national perspective and could not develop as the organ of national struggle. Not having its roots in the soil, this party very often erred in estimating a particular situation or crisis and consequently adopted a wrong policy.

Throughout 1938, the writer repeatedly advised the Congress Socialist Party to broaden its platform and form a Left Bloc, for rallying all the radical and progressive elements in the Congress. This the Party did not do. The mistake of the C. S. Party was that it talked too much about Socialism, which was after all a thing of the future. India's immediate requirements were an uncompromising struggle with British Imperialism and methods of struggle more effective than what Mahatma Gandhi had produced. Gandhism had been found wanting, because it was wedded to non-violence and therefore contemplated a compromise with Britain for the solution of the Indian problem. Moreover, it lacked a proper understanding of international affairs and of the importance of an international crisis for achieving India's liberation. A party was needed which could remedy these defects and bring about the complete liberation of India.

The immediate objective of the Forward Bloc was an uncompromising struggle with British Imperialism for winning India's independence. To this end, all possible means should be employed and the Indian people should not be hampered by any philosophical notions like Gandhian non-violence, or any sentimentalism like Nehru's anti-Axis foreign policy. The Bloc stood for a realistic foreign policy and a post-war order in India on a Socialist basis.

The Forward Bloc sprang into existence in response to an historical necessity. That is why from the very beginning, it had a tremendous mass appeal—and its popularity

From January, 1935, Till September, 1939

began to increase by leaps and bounds. In fact, some months later, the Mahatma remarked that the writer's popularity had increased after he resigned the Congress Presidentship.

When war broke out in Europe, in September, 1939, the people who had been sceptics before, appreciated the writer's political foresight in having advocated a six month's ultimatum to the British Government in March of that year, at the annual session of the Congress at Tripuri. This further enhanced the Bloc's popularity.

CHAPTER III

FROM SEPTEMBER, 1939, TILL AUGUST, 1942

THE propaganda offensive of the Forward Bloc was in full swing from May, 1939, onwards. In July of that year, the Gandhi Wing reacted by trying to curb this activity. On some pretext or other, "disciplinary action" was taken against some members of the Bloc by the Congress Working Committee. But this only served to strengthen the morale of the Bloc members and to increase their popularity among the masses.

On September 3, 1939, the writer was addressing a mammoth meeting on the sea-beach in Madras where about two hundred thousand people were present—the biggest meeting he has ever addressed—when somebody from the audience put an evening paper into his hand. He looked and read that Britain was at war with Germany. Immediately, the speaker switched over to the subject of the war. The much expected crisis had at last come. This was India's golden opportunity.

On the same day that Britain declared war on Germany, the Viceroy declared India a belligerent and issued an ordinance containing the most stringent powers for the suppression of internal disorder. On September 11, he announced that the inauguration of the federal constitution under the Act of 1935 was postponed for the duration of the war.

On the 6th September, Mahatma Gandhi, after meeting the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, issued a press statement saying that in spite of the differences between India and Britain on the question on Indian independence, India should cooperate with Britain in her hour of danger. This state-

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

ment came as a bomb-shell to the Indian people, who since 1927, had been taught by the Congress leaders to regard the next war as a unique opportunity for winning freedom. Following the above statement of Gandhi, many leaders belonging to the Gandhi Wing began to make public declarations to the effect that though they demanded freedom for India, they wanted Britain to win the war. As this sort of propaganda was likely to have a very unfortunate effect on Indian public opinion, the Forward Bloc, which was by now an All-India organisation, commenced counter-propaganda on a large scale. As against the Gandhi Wing, the Forward Bloc took the line that the Congress had since 1927 repeatedly declared that India should not cooperate in Britain's war and that the Congress should now put that policy into practice. The members of the Forward Bloc also declared openly that they did not want Britain to win the war because only after the defeat and break-up of the British Empire could India hope to be free.

Apart from the general propaganda carried on by the Forward Bloc, the writer made a lecture tour throughout the country, in the course of which he must have addressed about a thousand meetings in the course of ten months. That the British Government should permit such anti-British and anti-war propaganda came as a surprise to many, including the writer. The fact, however, was that the British Government was afraid that if drastic measures were taken against the Forward Bloc, it would provoke the Congress and the public in general to launch a campaign of passive resistance against the British Government. Because of sheer nervousness on the part of the British Government, the Forward Bloc was able to continue its anti-British and anti-war propaganda, though in the course of this propaganda, many members were thrown into prison.

The propaganda of the Forward Bloc found an enthusiastic echo all over India. Mahatma Gandhi and his

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

followers thereupon realised that the policy of cooperation with Britain would not find any support among the public and would surely lead to the loss of their influence and popularity. Consequently, they began to alter their attitude gradually.

More strange even than Gandhi's attitude was the attitude of Nehru. From 1927 to 1938, he had figured prominently in all the anti-war resolutions of the Congress. Consequently, when the war broke out, people naturally expected him to take the lead in an anti-war policy. According to the previous resolutions of the Congress, the party should have immediately non-cooperated with Britain's war-effort in September, 1939, and if after that, the Government had exploited India for the war—the Congress party should have actively resisted the British Government. Not only did Nehru not adopt this policy, but he used all his influence in order to prevent the Congress from embarrassing the British Government while the war was on.

The Executive (Working Committee) of the Congress met on the 8th September, at Wardha to decide what attitude the Congress should take up towards the war. The writer, who was not a member then, was especially invited to the meeting and he gave expression to the view of the Forward Bloc that the struggle for freedom should begin at once. He added that in case the Congress Executive did not take the necessary steps in this connection, the Forward Bloc would consider itself free to act as it thought fit in the best interest of the country.

This uncompromising attitude had its effect and the Gandhi Wing gave up altogether the idea of cooperation with the British Government. Then there followed prolonged discussions and ultimately on September 14, the Working Committee passed a lengthy resolution asking the British Government to declare its war aims. The resolution, further, declared that if India were granted freedom,

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

then "a free and democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation."

This resolution was, in substance, an offer of cooperation in Britain's war-effort under certain conditions.

On October 17, the Viceroy replied to this resolution of the Congress with a statement which was published in London as a White Paper. The Viceroy's offer was a proposal to establish a "Consultative Group", including Indian representatives, which would advise the Viceroy on questions pertaining to the war. He also reaffirmed the pledge of Dominion Status at some future date, which had been first made ten years ago by the then Viceroy, Lord Halifax (Irwin).

Apart from this reply of the British Government, what infuriated the Indian people most was that while the Allied Powers were talking of fighting for "freedom and democracy", in India the Constitution of 1935 was suspended, all powers were concentrated in the hands of the Viceroy, and in many parts of India severe restrictions on personal liberty were imposed—e.g. prohibition of all public meetings and demonstrations, imprisonment without trial etc.

The writer is definitely of the opinion that if the Congress as a whole had taken up a bold and unequivocal attitude of determined opposition to the war from the very outset—Britain's war-production in India would have been seriously affected and it would not have been easy for the British Government to send Indian troops on active service to different theatres of war, far away from India. Consequently, in his view, by postponing a final decision on the war-issue—Gandhi, Nehru and their followers helped the British Government indirectly. It is but natural that when the Congress did not give a clear lead to the country, the propaganda carried on by the agents of British Imperialism

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

in India should partially succeed in winning the cooperation of certain sections of the Indian people.

On October 29, the Congress Working Committee replied to the Viceroy's pronouncement of October 17 with a resolution which contained a threat of civil disobedience (or passive resistance). Along with this, the Committee ordered the Congress Ministers in eight provinces to lay down office. Since the Viceroy was issuing orders to the Provincial Governments to carry out the war-policy of the British Government, the Congress Ministers had either to cooperate in the war-effort or to resign office.

It was generally expected that after the Congress Ministers resigned office, the campaign of passive resistance would begin. But this expectation was not fulfilled. Many people are of opinion that British intrigue was responsible for this. The British Government sent out to India some British Liberals and Democrats in order to influence Congress leaders. For instance, in October, 1939, the well-known writer, Mr. Edward Thompson, visited India and he was followed by Sir Stafford Cripps who came in December.

Besides carrying on a continuous propaganda against cooperation in the war and in favour of commencing a national struggle for independence, the Forward Bloc organised periodic demonstrations for focussing public attention on these issues. For instance, in October, 1939, an Anti-Imperialist Conference was held at Nagpur which was a great success. And at the end of six months, the Bloc's propaganda culminated in a huge demonstration at Ramgarh in March, 1940, where the annual session of the Congress was being held at the time. The demonstration was called the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference. It was convened by the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha (Peasants' Organisation) and it was a greater success than the Congress meeting at Ramgarh which was presided over by Moulana Abul Kalam Azad.

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

The Congress did not decide anything at Ramgarh about its war-policy. For six months its policy had been non-committal, with the result that the British Government had been going on exploiting India for war purposes. The Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh, led by the writer and Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, the peasant leader, decided, therefore to immediately launch a fight over the issue of the war and of India's demand for independence. During the National Week in April (April 6th to April 13th), 1940,—the Forward Bloc commenced, all over the country, its campaign of civil disobedience. Prominent members of the Bloc were gradually put in prison. In Bengal too, where the writer was living at the time, the campaign flared up and early in July, the writer along with hundreds of his co-workers were put in prison.

A few days before he was thrown into prison, that is, in June, 1940, the writer had his last long talk with Mahatma Gandhi and his principal lieutenants. India had received the news of the final collapse of France. The German troops had made a triumphal entry into Paris. British morale, in England and in India, had sunk low. A British Minister had found it necessary to rebuke the British public for going about "with long faces as if they were at a funeral". In India, the civil disobedience campaign started by the Forward Bloc was going on and many of the Bloc leaders were already in prison. The writer, therefore, made a passionate appeal to the Mahatma to come forward and launch his campaign of passive resistance—since it was now clear that the British Empire would be overthrown and it was high time for India to play her part in the war. But the Mahatma was still non-committal and he repeated that, in his view, the country was not prepared for a fight and any attempt to precipitate it, would do more harm than good to India. However, at the end of a long and hearty talk, he told the writer that if his (the writer's) efforts to win

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

freedom for India succeeded—then his (Gandhi's) telegram of congratulation would be the first that the writer would receive.

On this occasion, the writer had also long talks with the leaders of some other organisations—e.g. with Mr. Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League and Mr. Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha. Mr. Jinnah was then thinking only of how to realise his plan of Pakistan (division of India) with the help of the British. The idea of putting up a joint fight with the Congress, for Indian independence, did not appeal to him at all though the writer suggested that in the event of such a united struggle taking place, Mr. Jinnah would be the first Prime Minister of Free India. Mr. Savarkar seemed to be oblivious of the international situation and was only thinking how Hindus could secure military training by entering Britain's army in India. From these interviews, the writer was forced to the conclusion that nothing could be expected from either the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha.

On May 20, 1940, Pandit Nehru made an astounding statement in which he said, "Launching a civil disobedience campaign at a time when Britain is engaged in a life and death struggle would be an act derogatory to India's honour." Similarly, the Mahatma said, "We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence." It was clear that the Gandhi wing was doing everything possible in order to arrive at a compromise with Britain.

On July 27, the All-India Congress Committee in a meeting at Poona which the Mahatma did not attend, made an offer of cooperation with Britain in the war, provided the demand of the Congress for independence was conceded. At this time, the Mahatma retired from the leadership of the Congress, because it was difficult for him to support the war-effort owing to his faith in non-violence.

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

The Viceroy's reply to the Congress resolution came on August 8, when he made an offer to include a number of representative Indians in his Executive Council, as well as on his Consultative Council. But that was not independence or anything approaching it.

In the meantime, after the writer's incarceration in July, 1940, the campaign of the Forward Bloc continued with increasing vigour. This campaign stirred the rank and file of the Gandhi Wing. In spite of orders from above that no followers of the Gandhi Wing should commence passive resistance, the rank and file, and especially the volunteers, took up the campaign in some provinces. This produced a great commotion among the Gandhian leaders. Some of them began to press the Mahatma to launch the fight—otherwise they would lose all influence and prestige in the country. Others began gradually to join the fight without waiting for his orders. Ultimately, Gandhi's hands were forced. On September 15, the Congress withdrew its offer of cooperation and invited the Mahatma to resume the leadership of the Congress. In October, 1940, the Mahatma declared that he had decided to commence resistance to the British Government's war-efforts—but not on a mass scale. In November, 1940, Gandhi's campaign began and within a short time, all the Congress Ministers in eight provinces who participated in the movement were taken to prison, along with hundreds of influential leaders.

The campaign in 1940-41 was not conducted by the Mahatma with that enthusiasm and vehemence which one had seen in 1921 and again in 1930-32—though objectively the country was more ripe for a revolution than before. Evidently, Gandhi still wanted to keep the door open for a compromise—which would not be possible if too much bitterness against the British was roused in the course of the campaign. Nevertheless, the Forward Bloc was jubilant that Gandhi's hands had been forced. Now that both wings

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

of the Congress—the Gandhi Wing and the Forward Bloc—were definitely committed to an anti-British and anti-war policy, it was time to consider bigger plans for achieving the independence of India.

The writer was then confined in prison without any trial. Long study and deliberation had convinced him about three things. Firstly, Britain would lose the war and the British Empire would break up. Secondly, in spite of being in a precarious position, the British would not hand over power to the Indian people and the latter would have to fight for their freedom. Thirdly, India would win her independence if she played her part in the war against Britain. The conclusion he drew for himself was that India should actively enter the field of international politics.

He had already been in British custody eleven times, but he now felt that it would be a gross political blunder to remain inactive in prison, when history was being made elsewhere. He then explored the possibility of being released in a legal manner, but found that there was none, because the British Government was determined to keep him locked up, so long as the war lasted. Thereupon, he sent an ultimatum to the Government pointing out that there was no moral or legal justification for detaining him in jail and that if he was not released forthwith, he would fast unto death. He was determined to get out of prison, whether dead or alive.

The Government laughed at the ultimatum and did not reply. At the last moment, the Home Minister requested his brother, Sarat Chandra Bose, Leader of the Congress Party in the Provincial Parliament, to inform the writer that it was a mad project and that Government could do nothing. Late at night, he was visited in his prison-cell by his brother who conveyed the Minister's message to him and informed him, further, that the attitude of the Government was very hostile. The next morning the fast began as



Sukha Chandra Bose, in Berlin, 1941.

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

already announced. Seven days later, the authorities suddenly got frightened, lest the writer should die in prison. A secret conference of high officials was hurriedly held and it was decided to release him, with the intention of re-arresting him after a month or so, when his health improved.

After his release, the writer was at home for about forty days and did not leave his bed-room. During this period, he surveyed the whole war-situation and came to the conclusion that Indian freedom-fighters should have first-hand information as to what was happening abroad and should join the fight against Britain and thereby contribute to the break-up of the British Empire. After considering the different means whereby this could be done, he found no other alternative but to travel abroad himself. Towards the end of January, 1941, he quietly left his home one night at a late hour. Though he was always closely watched by the Secret Police, he managed to dodge them and after an adventurous journey, managed to cross the Indian frontier. It was the biggest political sensation that had happened in India for a long time.

During the year 1941, the Civil Disobedience Movement continued—but without much enthusiasm on the part of Gandhi and his followers. The Mahatma had calculated that by following a mild policy, he would ultimately open the door towards a compromise—but in this, he was disappointed. His goodness was mistaken for weakness and the British Government went on exploiting India for war-purposes to the best of its ability. The Government also exploited to the fullest extent such agents, as the erstwhile Communist leader, M. N. Roy, who were prepared to sell themselves to Britain.

Ultimately, the British Government woke up from its self-complacency when in November, 1941, war-clouds appeared in the Far Eastern horizon. Early in December,

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

the Congress leaders belonging to the Gandhi Wing were suddenly set free. But simultaneously, leaders belonging to the Left Wing were clapped in prison. For instance, when the war in the Far East broke out, Sarat Chandra Bose, the brother of the writer, was sent to prison without any trial. This was followed, some time later, by the incarceration of Sardar Sardul Singh Cavesheer, the Acting President of the Forward Bloc. The Government probably thought that by this dual policy of arresting the Leftists and releasing the Gandhiites, it would come to a settlement with the Congress.

The desire of the British Government for a compromise with the Congress was reciprocated by the Gandhi Wing. The Congress Working Committee, meeting at Wardha on the 16th January, 1942, passed a resolution offering co-operation in the war-effort once again. Soon after—that is, in February, 1942, at the instance of the British Government, Marshal Chiang Kai Shek visited India with a view to inducing the Congress leaders to come to an understanding with the British Government. A month later—in March, 1942,—an American Technical Mission, some American diplomats and journalists and several American military units arrived in India. In April, the British Commander-in-Chief in India was forced to seek the help of Marshal Chiang Kai Shek and bring Chinese troops to Burma.

The fall of Singapore on February 15, 1942, after one week's fighting, caused consternation in Britain and in America. When the Japanese forces after finishing the Malayan campaign advanced into Burma, the British Prime Minister was forced to turn over a new leaf and on March 11, made a conciliatory speech announcing the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps to India on behalf of the War Cabinet.

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India in March, 1942, under auspicious circumstances. In view of the rapid and brilliant success of the Japanese forces, the British Govern-

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

ment was in a chastened mood and Cripps was regarded by the general public as the right man for the right job. But his efforts, nevertheless, failed, because all that he had brought with him, was a promise of Dominion Status after the war ended. Coupled with this promise, was the threat that India would probably be divided, when the war was over. On April 10, the Congress Working Committee rejected the Cripps proposals on the ground that they in no way met India's demand for freedom. Sir Stafford Cripps made his farewell broadcast to the Indian people on the 11th April and then left India a disappointed man.

Following the departure of Cripps from India, the Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad on April 27 and the following days. On May 1, a resolution was passed rejecting the Cripps proposals and at the same time resolving to offer non-violent non-cooperation, if any foreign army entered India. In the absence of a compromise with Britain, there was no question of actively fighting on the side of Britain, against the Japanese or any other army.

Mahatma Gandhi did not attend this meeting, but he sent a draft resolution to the Committee which was strongly criticised by Nehru and some other members. "The whole background of the draft", declared Nehru, "is one which will inevitably make the whole world think we are passively linking up with the axis powers." Then Nehru made another draft which was at first rejected—but later on, owing to the passionate appeal of the Congress President, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, it was adopted unanimously. The Congress President, in supporting Nehru's draft said that there was no difference in meaning between the original draft of the Mahatma and the subsequent draft of Nehru and the difference was only one of approach.

In his original draft resolution, the Mahatma had *inter alia* said:—

"Britain is incapable of defending India. . . . The Indian

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

Army is a segregated body, unrepresentative of the Indian people, who can in no sense regard it as their own. Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. If India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of the Japanese or any other aggressors attacking India." In the same draft resolution, the Committee assured the Japanese Government and people that India bore no enmity towards Japan, etc. Nehru's draft which was finally accepted by the Congress Working Committee contained no reference to Japan or to Britain's incapacity to defend India.

A few months later, the British Government made a great fuss over Gandhi's draft resolution, by suddenly giving it world-wide publicity and simultaneously trying to paint Gandhi as a pro-Axis agent.

There was, however, nothing objectionable in the above draft resolution and its contents were in full accord with the policy consistently propagated by the Forward Bloc.

The much criticised draft resolution showed that Gandhi was not an ideological fanatic like Nehru and was much more of a realist than the latter. The outstanding feature of the Congress meeting was the departure from the Congress movement of Rajagopalachari, the leading protagonist of a compromise with Britain.

After the failure of Cripps' mission, people gradually thought that was the end of all talk of a compromise between India and Britain and that cooperation between the two was, therefore, impossible. Nevertheless, Pandit Nehru began a propaganda to the effect that even without a compromise, India should fight with Britain against Fascism. But this point of view was not accepted either by the Mahatma, or by the Gandhi Wing or by the general public. Ulti-

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

mately Nehru had to climb down and come round to the Mahatma's point of view.

Although the majority of the Congress was gradually coming round to the conclusion that, in view of the intransigence of the British War Cabinet, an open conflict with Britain was inevitable, the idea of a possible compromise with Britain was not altogether dead.

But as nothing more was to be expected from the British Government beyond the mess of pottage offered by Sir Stafford Cripps and unanimously rejected by the Congress, there was no other alternative for the Congress than to give practical expression to the Congress' demand for immediate independence. The Indian public opinion was also getting restless and it was no more possible to continue the policy of drift. As the Congress itself registered in its resolution of July 14, there was a "rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms". Something positive had to be done.

After two months of relative passivity the Congress Working Committee finally met in Wardha on July 6, 1942, and after 9 days deliberations passed the famous "Quit India" resolution on July 14, declaring that "Britain's rule in India must end immediately". In case this "appeal" went unheeded, the resolution further said, the Congress would then reluctantly be compelled to utilise, under the inevitable leadership of Gandhi, "all the non-violent strength it has gathered since 1920, when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of its political rights and liberty." There is no doubt that the Congress resolution came nearest in expressing the wish of the vast majority of the Indian people. It also brought the Congress fundamentally near the stand always taken by the writer, namely, that the destruction of British power in India was the sine qua non for the solution of all India's problems.

and that the Indian people would have to fight for the achievement of this goal.

Although the resolution passed by the Congress at Wardha was interpreted by Gandhi as "open rebellion", it did not entirely bridge the gulf that separated the Congress leadership as a whole from the policy of immediate, uncompromising and all-out fight against the British rule in India advocated by the writer. Expressions in the resolution itself, such as, that the Congress has no desire whatever "to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war", or "jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied Powers", or that the Congress would be agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the allies in India for defensive purposes if India was free, clearly show that the idea of the desirability of an understanding with Britain and the possibility for realising this desired understanding was still in the minds of some Congress leaders. They also show much shifting of ground by the Congress from the position taken by Gandhi in his draft resolution submitted to the Congress Working Committee on May 27. This draft resolution, we may recall, declared inter alia that Japan's quarrel was not with India; she was warring against the British Empire; India's participation in the war had not been with the consent of the Indian people; and that if India were freed, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. In fact, the illusions cherished by a few Congress leaders made them go so far as to hope that the United Nations and specially America might intervene in the Indian question in favour of India's national demand.

However, these people constituted a very tiny minority. Even Nehru who most ardently wished an understanding with Britain answered in the negative when asked by foreign correspondents after the Wardha meeting "if an American guarantee of the British promise to give India complete independence after the war would meet the case". What

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

Congress was interested in, said Nehru, was "independence here and now". No doubt this was also the mood of the country.

The passing of the "Quit India" resolution by the Congress cleared the political atmosphere of the country vitiated by Cripps negotiations. By declaring that the Congress would launch civil disobedience movement, it forestalled all possible weakening through mutual dissension of the national will for independence, which it was the intention of the British Government to undermine by sending Sir Stafford Cripps to India.

The Congress Working Committee decided to meet early in August to discuss once again the Wardha resolution before submitting it for final ratification to the All-India Congress Committee scheduled to meet in Bombay on August 7. The political fever in the country rose as August approached. British correspondents in India complained in their despatches that Congress leaders were "stumping the country" calling the people to revolt. In any case, moderates and liberals through their frantic activities to persuade the Congress not to begin direct action before a new modus vivendi could be found to end the deadlock, indicated that the Congress decision effectively pointed to a revolutionary development of the political tension prevailing in the country.

The final draft resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee on August 4, on which the All-India Congress Committee were to begin deliberations on August 7, displayed what the correspondent of the Manchester Guardian called "a more constructive approach" than the Wardha resolution of mid-July. The assurance that Free India will "throw all her great resources" into the struggle on Britain's side indicated that in Congress view a free India would never contemplate a separate peace. Thus it is clear that before finally launching its decisive

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

struggle to achieve India's freedom, the Congress went still farther in holding out the olive branch to the British Government.

On August 8, the All-India Congress Committee adopted by overwhelming majority the Working Committee's resolution. Only a negligible minority consisting of Communists and some followers of Rajagopalachari voted against it. After the announcement of the result, Mahatma Gandhi, in a stirring ninety minute speech, gave expression to his determination to fight to the finish even if he stood alone against the whole world.

While all this was taking place, the British authorities were not sitting idle. Preparations were in full swing to strike at the Congress first and hard. But in keeping with the practice of the British Imperialists to give an air of constitutional legality to all their repressive and illegal acts against the Indian people, the Indian Government published a lengthy justificatory statement immediately following the ratification of the "Quit India" resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. This statement, referring to the Congress demand for the immediate withdrawal of British power from India, and the decision to start "a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale", declared that the Government "had been aware, too, for some days past of the dangerous preparations by the Congress party for unlawful, and in some cases violent, activities directed, among other things, to interruption of communications and public utility services, the organisation of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants, and interference with defence measures, including recruitment". In the view of the Government of India, so went on the statement,—a masterpiece of British hypocrisy—the acceptance of the Congress demand would mean not only the betrayal of "their responsibilities to the people of India" but must also "mean betrayal of the allies, whether in or

From September, 1939, Till August, 1942

outside India, the betrayal in particular of Russia and China, the betrayal of those ideals to which so much support has been given and is being given today from the true heart and mind of India". The fact was however that the British Government, in preparing for the brutal suppression of the national will to freedom of the Indian people, was acting in total and cynical disregard of the principles of freedom so pompously enunciated in the Atlantic Charter by Churchill and the President of the United States.

The All-India Congress Committee concluded its session on Saturday night. In the early hours of the morning of Sunday, August 9, the Indian Government struck. As Bombay's British Commissioner of Police came to arrest Mahatma Gandhi, he very typically asked for half an hour's grace to finish his morning prayers. Gandhi's last message was: we get our freedom or we die.

At the same time, the police were busy rounding up all the Congress leaders assembled in Bombay and elsewhere. In the course of a few hours, the entire Congress movement with its ramifications spread over the length and breadth of the country had become underground. The Churchill Amery and Company had dropped their hypocritical mask as champions of liberty and democracy. The horrible face of a soulless alien despotism had revealed itself to the Indian people in all its nakedness. A new chapter in the history of India's struggle for freedom had begun.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE STRUGGLE AND AFTER*

FRIENDS,—Allow me to congratulate you on your decision to summon a Political Conference of Indians abroad at a most critical time in the history of our country. It was so good of you to invite me to preside over the deliberations of this Conference—the Third Indian Political Conference—and I thank you most sincerely for the honour you have done me.

We had been engaged in a non-violent war with the British Government—for the attainment of our political freedom. But to-day our condition is analogous to that of an army that has suddenly surrendered unconditionally to the enemy in the midst of a protracted and strenuous campaign. And the surrender has taken place, not because the nation demanded it—not because the national army rose in revolt against its leaders and refused to fight—not because the supply of the sinews of war was cut off—but either because the Commander-in-Chief was exhausted as a result of repeated fasting or because his mind and judgment were clouded owing to subjective causes which it is impossible for an outsider to understand.

What would have happened—I ask—if a similar incident had taken place in any other country? What happened to all the Governments that surrendered to the enemy at the end of the Great War? But India is a strange land.

* The Presidential speech of Sj. Subhas Bose at the third Indian Political Conference at Friars Hall, London on June 10, 1933.

The surrender of 1933 reminds one of the Bardoli Retreat of 1922. But in 1922, some explanation, however unsatisfactory, could be offered to justify the retreat. The outbreak of violence at Chauri Chaura was suggested as the pretext for suspending the Civil disobedience campaign in 1922. What explanation or pretext can one suggest to account for the surrender of 1933?

There can be no doubt that the non-co-operation movement that was launched in 1920 and has been in existence in some form or other since that date—was the movement best suited to India in the fateful year 1920. There can be no doubt that in 1920 when political India was looking forward to a more militant plan of action—Mahatma Gandhi was the one man who could stand up as the undisputed spokesman of the people and lead them on from victory to victory. And there can also be no doubt that during the last decade India has completed the march of a century. But standing to-day at the cross-roads of Indian History—it is meet and proper that we should try to discover the mistakes of the past—so that our future activity may be directed along the right lines and all possible pitfalls may be avoided.

For the attainment of freedom two paths are open to us. One is the path of uncompromising militancy. The other is the path of compromise. If we follow the first path, the fight for liberty will have to be pursued till we are able to wrest political power in its entirety and there can be no question of a compromise along the road to freedom. If, on the other hand, we follow the second path, periodical compromises may have to be made with our opponents for consolidating our position, before further attempts are made.

At the outset it should strike everybody that it is not at all clear if our movement during the last thirteen years has been following the path of uncompromising militancy or that of compromise. This ideological ambiguity has been

The Struggle and After

responsible for a lot of mischief. If our policy had been one of uncompromising militancy, the Bardoli surrender of 1922 would never have taken place—nor would the Delhi Pact of March, 1931, have been entered into. On the other hand, if we had been following the path of compromise, we should never have missed the opportunity of a bargain with the British Government in December, 1931—when the situation was so opportune. In March, 1931, the situation was not opportune for a compromise from our point of view—nevertheless a truce was established between the Indian National Congress and the British Government. And considering our strength in March, 1931—the terms of the truce were altogether unsatisfactory. In short, as political fighters we have been neither sufficiently militant—nor sufficiently diplomatic.

In a fight between an unarmed subject people like the Indians and a first-class imperialist power like Great Britain—the supply of our necessary resources depends on our ability to keep up the enthusiasm of the people and maintain the spirit of opposition towards the Government. In the case of a war between two well-equipped and well-trained armies, the psychological factor is not so important as in our case. In 1922, when the whole nation had been roused to passionate activity and greater daring and sacrifice could be expected of the people the Commander-in-Chief suddenly hoisted the white flag. And this happened after he had thrown away, a couple of months earlier, a unique opportunity for what would have appeared in the existing circumstances as an honourable compromise with the Bureaucracy.

It is not easy to learn or to remember the lessons of past history and the latest developments in India go to show that we have not yet assimilated the lessons of 1921 and 1922. And unfortunately for us, with the death of Desh-bandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru of hallowed

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

memory in 1925 and 1931 respectively—there disappeared from the Indian scene two political giants who might have saved India from the political mess in which she now finds herself.

In December, 1927, when the Indian National Congress met at Madras, the unanimous acceptance of the resolution on Independence gave an indication of the rising temper of our people. And when early in 1928 the Simon Commission landed at Bombay, the demonstrations throughout India were reminiscent of the glorious days of 1921. From one point of view, the situation in 1928 was more favourable than in 1921—because while in 1921 the Indian Liberals were actively opposed to the Congress—in 1928 they were actively opposed to the British Government and in the campaign against the Simon Commission there was a united front of the Congress and the Liberal Party. The arrival of the Simon Commission should therefore have been the occasion for reviving the movement which had been suspended arbitrarily by Mahatma Gandhi in 1922. Nevertheless, for full two years, instead of marching ahead we began to retreat. In December, 1928, a resolution was passed at the Calcutta Congress by approximately 1,300 votes to 900, which put back the clock by definitely committing the Congress to the acceptance of Dominion Status. Thus at Calcutta we retreated not only from the position at Madras in December, 1927—but also from the position at Nagpur in December, 1920—because the Nagpur resolution on Swaraj, in view of its vague terminology, could be interpreted to mean that the goal of the Indian people was to be "Independence" and not "Dominion Status".

The resolution of the Calcutta Congress gave the British Government one year's time within which they could offer Dominion Status to India. But the Government had no intention of making any such offer to India. The situation therefore became rather critical for the Congress leaders

The Struggle and After

when the year 1929 began to draw to a close without Dominion Status being in sight. Another gesture was made by the Congress leaders in November, 1929, on the eve of the Lahore Congress, but to no avail. In a joint manifesto—now generally known as the Delhi Manifesto—the leaders agreed to participate in the Round Table Conference in London if some assurance would be given that Dominion Status would be granted to India.

I was one of those who had the temerity to oppose Mahatma Gandhi's resolution on Dominion Status at the Calcutta Congress in 1928 and who had the presumption to condemn the Delhi Manifesto of November, 1929. We had to point out that the Round Table Conference was a misnomer because it was not a conference of plenipotentiaries representing the belligerent parties. A large number of nondescript Indians nominated by the Alien Government would be present at the Conference to do the bidding of the wily British politicians. Moreover, if the Conference by any chance arrived at any conclusions favourable to India—they would not be binding on the British Government. We also pointed out that the primary object of the Government in convening this Conference was to bring the Indians to England and make them fight amongst themselves for the amusement of the British people. We, therefore, urged that as the Sinn Feiners had boycotted the Irish Convention, which was Mr. Lloyd George's creation, so also the Indian National Congress should leave the Round Table Conference severely alone.

But ours was a cry in the wilderness. The leaders as a body were too anxious to find some honourable escape from the impending fight with the Government which was every day becoming unavoidable. But no such opportunity was given by the Government. Consequently when the Lahore Congress met in December, 1929, the temper of the people

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

had risen and there was no alternative for the leaders but to swallow the resolution on Independence.

But "Independence" which implied severance of the British connection—was like a pill bitter to the taste and difficult to digest. When the Congress unanimously adopted the resolution on Independence and thereby once for all ended the shilly-shallying of the last nine years—the moderate elements in the country were alarmed. Our leaders lost no time in trying to reassure them and beautiful phrases and attractive slogans were evolved for the purpose. We were told that Independence meant "Purna Swaraj" (an expression which one could interpret according to his convenience). Mahatma Gandhi issued early in 1930 his famous "eleven points" which according to him represented the substance of Independence and could form the basis of a compromise with the British Government. Thus the significance and the effect of the Lahore Congress resolution on Independence was nullified to a great extent through the action of the leaders themselves.

After the Lahore Congress it was impossible for the leaders not to do anything. The movement was therefore launched with the celebration of the Independence Day on the 26th January, 1930. By April the whole of India was in the throes of a revolution (may be a non-violent revolution). So great was the response of the people to the call to action that even Mahatma Gandhi was taken by surprise and he stated that the movement could have been started two years earlier.

The movement of 1930—like the earlier movement of 1921—took the Government by surprise and for a long time they were at a loss to decide as to the most effective means for crushing the movement. The international situation—economic and political—also helped India. It was therefore a mistake to suspend operations on the basis of what is known as the Delhi Pact (the Gandhi-Irwin Pact) of March,

The Struggle and After

1931. Even if the leaders wanted a compromise, they should have waited for a more opportune moment, and such a moment would certainly have arrived if the operations had continued for another six months or one year. But once again subjectivism prevailed—and objective factors and considerations were not taken into account when the Delhi Pact was entered into. I shall even go so far as to say that in the circumstances which prevailed in March, 1931—better terms could have been extracted from the Government if our leaders had possessed greater statesmanship and diplomacy.

As matters stood, the Delhi Pact was an advantage to the Government and a disaster to the people. The Government got time to study the tactics adopted by the Congress organisations in 1930 and 1931, so that they could perfect their machinery for striking a crushing blow whenever the Congress launched the movement once again. It is now a matter of common knowledge that the ordinances promulgated by the Government in January, 1932, and the detailed tactics adopted by them throughout the year, were carefully worked out before the year 1931 came to a close. But what did the Congress do? In spite of the fact that there was seething discontent in the Frontier Province, in the United Provinces and in Bengal, nothing was done by the leaders to prepare the country for the unavoidable resumption of the fight. In fact, I shall not be wrong if I say that till the last everything was done to avoid a possible resumption of hostilities.

The Delhi Pact had on the whole a soporific effect on the popular enthusiasm and passion—nevertheless, the temper of the people was too militant to be soothed by soft phrases. And if this had not been the case, I am sure that a resumption of hostilities would have been successfully avoided by the leaders. It is necessary for the workers of to-morrow to realise that the movement of 1932 was not

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

planned and organised by the leaders, as it should have been, but that they were dragged into it. And if this statement be true, should it surprise anybody if the leaders to-day feel anxious to get out of the troubles into which they were forced in January, 1932?

The Delhi Pact of March, 1931, will appear to be a painful document the more we study it:

- (1) In the first place there was not one word of commitment on the part of the British Government on the major issue of Swaraj.
- (2) In the second place there was a tacit acceptance of the proposal of federation with the Indian Princes—a proposal which, in my humble opinion, is disastrous to the political progress of the country.
- (3) Thirdly, there was no provision for the release of the incarcerated Garhwali soldiers—the finest apostles of non-violence—who refused to shoot down their unarmed countrymen.
- (4) Fourthly, there was no provision for the release of the state-prisoners and detenues who were imprisoned without any trial, charge or justification.
- (5) Fifthly, there was no provision for the withdrawal of the Meerut Conspiracy Case which had been dragging on for years.
- (6) Sixthly, there was no provision for the release of other classes of political prisoners, not convicted for participation in the Civil disobedience movement.

It will thus be seen that the Delhi Pact, by refusing to espouse the cause of the Garhwali soldiers, the state-prisoners, the Meerut Conspiracy prisoners and the revolutionary prisoners, deprived the Indian National Congress of the claim to be the central organ of the anti-imperialist struggle in India. By declining to be the spokesman of

The Struggle and After

these militant anti-imperialist elements in India, the Indian National Congress stood out before the Indian public as the spokesman and representative of the "Satyagrahies" (Civil resisters) alone.

If the Delhi Pact of March, 1931, was a blunder, the surrender of May, 1933, is a calamity of the first magnitude. According to the principles of political strategy, at a time when the new constitution for India is under discussion, the maximum pressure should have been brought to bear on the Government by a strengthening of the Civil disobedience movement in the country. By suspending the movement at this critical hour, the work, the suffering and the sacrifice of the nation for the last thirteen years have been virtually undone. And the tragedy of the situation is that the people who could have effectively protested against this gross betrayal are now safely lodged behind prison bars. As to those who are outside prison, a real protest has not probably been possible because of the 21 days' fast of Mahatma Gandhi.

But the die has been cast. Suspension of the Civil disobedience campaign for one month means virtually a permanent suspension—because mass movements cannot be created overnight. So the problem now before us is what we should do to make the most of a bad situation and what policy and plan we should adopt for the future.

Before we can solve this problem, two other questions will have to be answered by us:—

- (1) With regard to our goal, is a compromise between England and India ultimately possible?
- (2) With regard to our method, can India win political freedom by following the path of periodical compromise and without adopting an uncompromisingly militant plan of action?

To the first question I say that such a compromise is not possible. A political compromise is possible only when

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

there is some community of interest. But in the case of England and India there are no common interests which can make a compromise between the two nations possible and desirable, as we shall see from the following: —

- (1) There is no social kinship between the two countries.
- (2) There is hardly anything in common between the cultures of India and of Britain.
- (3) From the economic standpoint, India is to Britain a supplier of raw materials and a consumer of British manufactures. On the other hand, India aspires to be a manufacturing country, so that she could become self-contained in the matter of manufactured goods and could also export not only raw materials but manufactured goods as well.
- (4) India is at present one of the biggest markets for Great Britain. The industrial progress of India therefore is against Britain's economic interests.
- (5) India affords employment at present to young Britishers in the army and in the civil administration in India. But this is against India's interests and India wants her own children to occupy all these posts.
- (6) India is sufficiently strong and has enough resources to be able to stand on her own legs without the help or patronage of Great Britain. In this respect the position of India is quite different from that of the dominions.
- (7) India has so long been exploited and dominated by Britain that there is a genuine apprehension that in the event of a political compromise between the two countries, India will stand to lose and Britain will stand to gain. Moreover, India has developed

The Struggle and After.

an "inferiority complex" as a result of her long servitude, and this "inferiority complex" will remain as long as India is not completely independent of Britain.

- (8) India wants the status of a free country, with her own flag, her own army, navy and defence force, and with her own ambassadors in the capitals of free countries. Without this invigorating and life-giving freedom, Indians will never be able to rise to the full stature of their manhood. Independence is to India a psychological, ethical, cultural, economic and political necessity. It is an essential condition of the new awakening in India. Independence, which India aspires after to-day, is not "Dominion Home Rule", as we find in Canada or Australia, but full national sovereignty as obtains in the United States of America or in France.
- (9) As long as India remains within the British Empire she will not be able to safeguard the interests of other Indians who have settled in other parts of the Empire. The weight of Great Britain has always been, and always will be, thrown on the side of white races—as against the Indians. An independent India, on the other hand, will be able to secure better treatment for her children who have settled in different parts of the British Empire.

It will thus be seen that the basis of a compromise between India and Great Britain does not exist. Consequently, if the leaders of the Indian people disregard this fundamental fact and effect a compromise with the British Government, the arrangement will not last. Like the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact" of March, 1931, it will be short-lived. The social, economic and political forces working within India are such that no peace is possible between India and Britain till her legitimate aspirations are fulfilled.

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

The only solution of the present deadlock that is possible is through the attainment of India's freedom. This implies the defeat of the British Government in India. How India can win freedom for herself, we shall now have to consider.

With regard to the second question—namely, the question of the method we should adopt—I may say that the country has already rejected the path of periodical compromise. The support which the country gave to the Indian National Congress was due to the fact that the Congress promised to win Independence for India and promised to fight on and on till this was accomplished. Therefore, in determining our future policy and plan, we should rule out, once for all, the prospect of periodical compromises.

The Congress hoped to win political freedom for India by paralysing the Civil administration of the country through non-co-operation and Civil disobedience. It is necessary now to analyse the causes of our failure in doing so in order that we may be more successful in future.

The position of the British Government in India to-day in relation to the Indian National Congress can be compared to a well-armed and well-equipped fortress standing in the midst of territory which has suddenly become hostile. Now, however well-equipped a fortress may be, it requires for its safe existence for all time a friendly civil population living around and near it. But even if the surrounding population become hostile, the fortress has nothing to fear in the immediate future, so long as the people round about it do not make an active attempt to seize the fortress. The objective of the Indian National Congress is to get possession of the fortress now occupied by the British Government. Towards this end the Congress has succeeded in winning over the sympathy and support of the population living round about and near the fortress. This is the first stage of the campaign from the Indian side. For the next stage of

The Struggle and After

the campaign, either or both of the following steps can be taken: —

- (1) A complete economic blockade of the fortress, which will starve into submission the army occupying the fortress.
- (2) An attempt to capture the fortress by force of arms.

In the history of war both these methods have been tried with success. In the last great war Germany was the victor from a military point of view, but she was starved into submission through the economic blockade of the Allies. This blockade was possible because the Allies had control over the seas and over the lines of communication leading into Germany.

In India no attempt has been made to storm the enemy's citadal by force of arms, as the Congress policy has been pledged to non-violence. The economic blockade, though attempted in a general way by the Congress, has failed for three reasons: —

- (a) All the external communications leading to India are controlled by the Government.
- (b) Owing to defective organisation inside India the lines of communication from the seaports to the interior and from one part of the country to another are not controlled by the Congress, but by the Government.
- (c) The machinery for collecting revenue—on which depends the existence of the British Government in India—has not been seriously impaired. There have been deficits in most provinces, no doubt, but the Government have been able to make up either by increased taxation or by borrowing.

It should always be remembered that a nationalist movement can succeed in paralysing a foreign Government only when either or all of the following steps are taken: —

- (1) Prevention of tax and revenue collection.

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

- (2) Adoption of measures whereby help from other quarters—whether financial or military—may not reach the Government in times of distress.
- (3) Winning over the sympathy and support of the present supporters of the British Government in India—that is, of the Army, the Police, and the Civil Servants—so that orders given by the Government for crushing the movement will not be carried out.
- (4) Actual attempt to seize power by force of arms.

The last step has to be ruled out, because the Congress is pledged to non-violence. But it is nevertheless possible to paralyse the present administration and compel it to submit to our demands if we can adopt the following measures:—

- (1) Prevent collection of tax and revenue.
- (2) Through labour and peasant organisation prevent all kinds of help from reaching the Government when they are in difficulty.
- (3) Win the sympathy and support of the Government's own supporters by means of our superior propaganda.

If these three measures are adopted, the Governmental machinery can be thrown out of gear. In the first place, they will have no money to meet the cost of administration. In the second place, the orders they may issue will not be carried out by their own officers. And, lastly, help sent to the Government from other quarters will not reach them.

There is no royal road to success in winning political freedom. The above three measures have to be adopted in part or in whole if victory is to be achieved. The Congress has failed, simply because it has not succeeded in giving effect satisfactorily to any of the above three measures. The peaceful meetings, processions and demonstrations that have been held during the last few years, in spite of the official ban, show a spirit of defiance no doubt and also cause some

The Struggle and After

annoyance to the Government, but they do not yet menace the very existence of the Government. In spite of all our demonstrations and in spite of seventy thousand persons having gone to prison since January, 1932, the Government can still claim:—

- (1) That their army is quite loyal.
- (2) That their police forces are quite loyal.
- (3) That the Civil administration (collection of revenue and taxes, administration of law courts and of prisons, etc.) is still unimpaired.
- (4) That the life and property of Government officials and of their supporters are still quite safe.

And the Government can still boast that they do not care if the general population in India to-day are passively hostile. As long as the people do not actively menace the Government and their supporters, either with arms or through an effective economic blockade, the present Government can continue to exist for an indefinite period, in spite of our non-co-operation and Civil disobedience.

During the last decade there has been an unprecedented awakening all over India. The placid self-complacency of the people is gone. The whole country is throbbing with new life and is yearning for freedom. Fear of official frowns, of imprisonment, and of baton charges has disappeared. The prestige of the British has reached its lowest ebb. There is no question of goodwill on the Indian side towards the British Government. The moral basis of British rule has been demolished, and it rests to-day on the naked sword and on nothing else. And India has managed to capture the imagination of the world.

But the fact has to be faced that "free India" is still a thing of the future! The intentions of the British Government with regard to Indian aspirations as embodied in the recently published White Paper show clearly that they are not yet prepared to part with an iota of real power.

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

Apparently the British Government think that they are strong enough to resist successfully the demand of the Indian people. And if they are strong enough to resist us, it clearly shows that the most strenuous efforts of the Indian people since 1920 have failed to bring us appreciably nearer to our goal of "Swaraj".

India therefore must resolve to launch another fight on a bigger and more intensive scale. The intellectual and practical preparation for this must be scientific and must rest on objective foundations. The intellectual preparation for this task will entail the following measures:—

- (i) A scientific examination of the strong and weak points of British Rule in India in relation to the Indian people.
- (ii) A scientific examination of the strong and weak points of the Indian people in relation to British Rule in India.
- (iii) A scientific examination of the rise and fall of empires in the other parts of the world.
- (iv) A scientific examination of the history of freedom movements in other lands and a study of the gradual evolution of freedom in all its aspects in this world.

When this study is completed—and not till then—shall we be able to form a conception of the magnitude of the task that awaits us.

Our next requirement will be a party of determined men and women who will take upon themselves the task of delivering India—no matter what the suffering and sacrifice involved may be. Whether India will be able to free herself and to live once again as a free nation will depend on whether she can produce the requisite leadership. Her ability to produce the requisite leadership will be the test of her vitality and of her fitness for "Swaraj".

The Struggle and After

Our next requirement will be a scientific plan of action and a scientific programme for the future. The method of action beginning from to-day and right up to the conquest of power will have to be visualised and planned out in detail as far as humanly possible. The movement of the future must therefore be made to rest on an objective and scientific foundation in keeping with the facts of history and of human nature. Hitherto, too much appeal has been made to "inner light" and to subjective feeling in guiding a political campaign which is after all an objective movement.

Besides a plan of action which will lead up to the conquest of power, we shall require a programme for the new state when it comes into existence in India. Nothing can be left to chance. The group of men and women who will assume the leadership of the fight with Great Britain will also have to take up the task of controlling, guiding and developing the new state and, through the state, the entire Indian people. If our leaders are not trained for post-war leadership also, there is every possibility that after the conquest of power a period of chaos will set in and incidents similar to those of the French Revolution of the 18th century may be repeated in India. It should therefore be clear that the generals of the war-time period in India will have to carry through the whole programme of post-war reform in order to justify to their countrymen the hopes and aspirations that they will have to rouse during the fight. The task of these leaders will not be over till a new generation of men and women are educated and trained after the establishment of the new state and this new generation are able to take complete charge of their country's affairs.

The party of the future will have to part company with the erstwhile leaders of the Indian people, because, there is no possibility that the latter will be able to adopt the principles, programme, policy and tactics that will be required for the next phase of the grim fight with Great

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

Britain. Rarely in history—if ever at all—do we find the leaders of one epoch figuring as the leaders of the next. And it is no discredit to them if they fail. The times always produce the required men, and this will happen in India also.

The new party will have to play the role of the fighters and leaders in the “national” campaign against Great Britain and also the role of the architects of new India, who will be called upon to undertake the work of post-war social reconstruction. The Indian movement will have two phases. In the first phase, the fight will be a “national” fight against Great Britain—though the leadership will be in the hands of the “party of the people” representing Indian labour, and in the second phase, an inter-class fight under the leadership of the same party, and during this phase of the campaign all privileges, distinctions and vested interests will have to be abolished, so that a reign of perfect equality (social, economic and political) may be established in our country. India will be called upon to play an important role in world-history in the near future. We all know that, in the seventeenth century, England made a remarkable contribution to world-civilisation through her ideas of constitutional and democratic Government. Similarly, in the eighteenth century, France made the most wonderful contribution to the culture of the world through her ideas of “liberty, equality and fraternity”. During the nineteenth century Germany made the most remarkable gift through her Marxian Philosophy. During the twentieth century Russia has enriched the culture and civilisation of the world through her achievement in proletarian revolution, proletarian Government and proletarian culture. The next remarkable contribution to the culture and civilisation of the world, India will be called upon to make.

It is sometimes urged by our British friends that the British public have an open mind on the Indian question

The Struggle and After

and that we would gain much if we could win their sympathy by means of our propaganda. I do not, however, think that the British public have an open mind on the Indian question—it is not humanly possible. In India, administration and exploitation go hand in hand, and it is not exploitation by a group of British capitalists and financiers, but the exploitation of India by Great Britain as a whole. The British capital that has been invested in India has not come from the upper classes alone, but also from the middle classes, and probably to some extent from the poorer classes as well. Further, even the working classes of Great Britain cannot afford to see the Indian textile industry thrive at the expense of Lancashire. That is why India has not been made a party question by the great political parties in Great Britain. That is why the policy of brutal repression and persecution was continued in India even when there was a Labour Government in power in London. I know that there are individual members in the Labour Party who rise above selfish consideration and who are sincere in their desire to do justice to India. But however much we may admire them and however cordial our personal relations with them may be, the fact remains that they are not in a position to influence party decisions. And, judging from our past experience, we may say that we cannot expect any improvement in the Indian situation through a change of Government in Downing Street.

Since politics and economics are inextricably bound up together in India—and since British Rule in India exists not only for political domination but also for economic exploitation—it follows that political freedom is primarily an economic necessity to us. The problem of giving bread to our starving millions—the problem of clothing and educating them—the problem of improving the health and physique of the nation—all these problems cannot be solved so long as India remains in bondage. To think of economic

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

improvement and industrial development before India is free politically, is to put the cart before the horse. We are frequently asked as to what will be the internal condition of India when British Rule disappears from our country. Thanks to British propaganda, India has been portrayed before the world as a country full of internal conflicts in which peace has been preserved by the might of England. India certainly had her internal conflicts in the past, as every other country has. But these conflicts were solved by the people themselves. That is why Indian history from the most ancient times abounds in instances of mighty empires like that of Asoka the Great, under the ægis of which peace and prosperity reigned throughout the land. But the conflicts of to-day are permanent in character and they are artificially engineered by the agents of the third party in the country. And I have no doubt in my mind that real unity among the Indian people can never be achieved as long as British Rule exists in India.

Though we cannot expect anything from any political party in England, it is exceedingly important and necessary for our purpose that we should organise international propaganda on behalf of India. This propaganda must be both positive and negative. On the negative side we must refute the lies that are told about India consciously or unconsciously by the agents of Great Britain throughout the world. On the positive side we must bring to the notice of the world the rich culture of India in all its aspects as well as India's manifold grievances. It goes without saying that London must be an important centre for this international propaganda. It is to be regretted that till quite recently the Indian National Congress did not realise the value and the necessity of international propaganda. But we now hope that our countrymen in the days to come will realise in an increasing degree the value of international propaganda.

There is probably nothing which I admire so much

The Struggle and After

about the Britisher as his skill in propaganda. A Britisher is a born propagandist, and to him propaganda is more powerful than howitzers. There is one other country in Europe which has learnt this lesson from Britain, and that is Russia. And it is not surprising that Britain cordially dislikes Russia and is even afraid of her for having discovered the secret of her (Britain's) success.

There is so much of hostile propaganda carried on in this world against India by British agents that if only we could state the real condition of India and her grievances against Britain—we would at once get a large measure of international sympathy. I will now mention some of the points in connection with which active propaganda is necessary throughout the world:—

- (1) Ill-treatment of political prisoners in India and the transportation of long-term political prisoners to the unhealthy Andaman Islands, where recently two of them have died as a result of hunger strike.
- (2) Extreme vindictiveness displayed by the Government in the matter of issuing passports to Indians. (It is not known outside India that innumerable Indians have been refused passports for going out of India, while Indians living abroad have been refused passports for returning to India.)
- (3) The systematic practice of aeroplane bombing in India, particularly in the North-Western Frontier, for terrorising helpless villagers.
- (4) The strangling of India's indigenous industries—including the ship-building industry—by Great Britain during her rule in India.
- (5) The popular and widespread opposition in India to any scheme of Imperial Preference, including the Ottawa Pact. (The world should be informed that India never accepted the Ottawa Pact, but that it was forced down our unwilling throats.)

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

- (6) The popular opposition in India to any proposal for a tariff truce, since India urgently wants protection for her infant industries.
- (7) The fixing of the exchange rate arbitrarily by England in a manner that is prejudicial to India's interests. The world should know how Great Britain has robbed India of crores of rupees merely through the manipulation of the exchange rate.
- (8) Further, the world should be told that Great Britain has saddled India with a heavy public debt for which Indian nationalists refuse to accept any responsibility. As early as in 1922 the Indian National Congress at its Gaya session gave notice to the Government that it would refuse to accept any responsibility for this public debt. It is a matter of common knowledge that the debt was incurred not for India's benefit, but for the interests of British imperialists.

It is exceedingly important and necessary that some propaganda should be conducted on behalf of India for the World Economic Conference and the Disarmament Conference. A carefully prepared memorandum stating the economic grievances of India against Great Britain and giving expression to the real voice of India on economic questions should be placed before every member of the World Economic Conference.

With regard to the Disarmament question, India should tell the world that British sincerity should be put to the test by making India a test case. In a land where the people have been disarmed for nearly 80 years, where the entire population is altogether emasculated, what justification is there for spending more than 50 per cent. of the central revenues over military expenditure?

I feel sure that if all the facts in this connection are

The Struggle and After

brought to the notice of the world, there will be an unanswerable case against England.

Whenever the question of India is brought up before a World Congress or a World Conference the usual plea raised by the protagonists of Great Britain is that India is a domestic question so far as the British Empire is concerned. This is a position which Indians should refuse to accept any longer. If India is a member of the League of Nations, surely she is a nation and has all the rights and privileges of a nation. I know that we shall have to fight hard and fight strenuously before we can alter the present status of India in international affairs. Nevertheless it is imperative that the attempt should begin without delay.

It is not necessary for me to go into a detailed consideration of the contents of the White Paper, as they do not deserve such an examination. I shall only say that the proposal of Federation with the Princes is an impossible and unacceptable proposition. We shall certainly work for the unification of the whole of India—for a federation of the Indian people. But we cannot accept the present proposal of substituting the Princes for the present official bloc in the Legislatures, in order to satisfy the whims of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or of Lord Sankey. And it is futile to talk of "freedom" and "safeguards" in the same breath. If we are to have freedom there can be no safeguards, for freedom itself is the only safeguard that we can have. To talk of "safeguards in the interest of India" is but a species of self-deception.

It is not possible to say to-day when we shall get a constitution which will give some substantial power to the people. But there can be no doubt that when we do get that power the people will insist on having the right to bear arms. They also will say to the world, and particularly to the British Government: "Disarm, or we shall arm." While voluntary disarming is a great blessing to this sorrow-

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

stricken world, the forcible disarming of a conquered people for nearly 80 years, as we see in India, is one of the greatest of curses. And the much-vaunted Pax Britannica which we see in India is not the peace of a healthy life, but peace of the graveyard.

I have already referred to the dual role which the new party will be called upon to play if it is to justify its existence. In order to be able to seize political power and thereafter use it for the creation of a new social order, it is necessary that our people should be trained for the task from to-day. I have no doubt in my own mind that in solving the problems of our national life, when India is free, original thought and fresh experiment will be necessary, if we are to achieve success. The experience of the older generation and of the teachers of the past will not be of much avail. The socio-economic conditions of free India will be altogether different from what prevails now. In industry, agriculture, land-tenure, money, exchange, currency, education, prison administration, public health, etc., new theories and novel experiments will have to be devised. We know, for example, that in Soviet Russia a new scheme of national (or political) economy has been evolved in keeping with the facts and conditions of the land. The same thing will happen to India. In solving our economic problem, Pigeon and Marshall will not be of much help.

Already in Europe and in England old theories in every department of life are being challenged and new theories are taking their places. As an instance, let me mention the new theory of Free Money, evolved by Silvio Gesell, which has been put into operation in a small community in Germany and proved thoroughly satisfactory. The same thing will happen in India. Free India will not be a land of capitalists, landlords and castes. Free India will be a social and a political democracy. The problems of free

The Struggle and After

India will be quite different from those of present-day India, and it will therefore be necessary to train men from to-day who will be able to visualise the future, to think in terms of free India and solve those problems in anticipation. In short, it will be necessary to educate and train from to-day the future cabinet of free India.

Every great movement starts from small beginnings, and so it will be in India. Our first task will be to gather together a group of men and women who are prepared to undergo the maximum sacrifice and suffering which will be necessary if we are to attain success in our mission. They must be whole-time workers—"Freedom-intoxicated" missionaries—who will not be discouraged by failure or deterred by difficulty of any kind and who will vow to work and strive in the service of the great cause till the last day of their lives.

When these "morally prepared" men and women are available they must be given the requisite intellectual training, so that they may be able to realise the magnitude of their task. They will have to make a scientific and critical study of the freedom movement in other lands, so that they may understand how similar problems have been solved in other countries, in spite of similar difficulties. Side by side with this they must also make a scientific and critical study of the rise and fall of empires in other ages and climes. Armed with this knowledge, they should proceed to make a scientific examination of the strong and weak points of the British Government in India in relation to the Indian people and a similar scientific examination of the strong and weak points of the Indian people in relation to the British Government.

When this intellectual training is completed we shall have a clear notion of the plan of action that will be necessary for the conquest of power and also of the programme that should be put into operation when the new state is

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

brought into existence after the seizure of power. It is thus evident that we want a party of determined men and women who have consecrated their lives to the great cause, who have had the necessary intellectual training and who have formed a clear conception of the work they will have to do before the conquest of power and thereafter.

It will be the task of this party to deliver India from foreign yoke. It will be the task of this party to create a new, independent and sovereign state in India. It will be the task of this party to execute the entire programme of post-war socio-economic reconstruction. It will be the task of this party to create a new generation of men and women in India fully trained and equipped for the battle of life. Last, but not least, it will be the task of this party to lead India on to her honoured place among the free nations of the world.

Let this party be called the SAMYAVADI-SANGHA. It will be a centralised and well-disciplined All-India Party—working amongst every section of the community. This party will have its representatives working in the Indian National Congress, in the All-India Trade Union Congress, in the Peasants' organisation, in the women's organisations, in the youth organisations, in the student organisations, in the depressed classes' organisations, and, if necessary in the interests of the great cause, in the sectarian or communal organisations as well. The different branches of the party working in different spheres and in different places must be under the control and guidance of the central committee of the party.

† This party will work in co-operation with any other party, that may be working towards the same end, in whole or in part. It will not bear enmity towards any individual or party, but at the same time it will look upon itself as specially called upon to play the role in history that has been described above.

The Struggle and After

In addition to the activities of the SAMYAVADI-SANGHA that we have described above, branches of the SANGHA should be started all over the country for carrying on a general propaganda about the ideals, aims and objects of the new party. The SAMYAVADI-SANGHA will stand for all-round freedom for the Indian people—that is, for social, economic and political freedom. It will wage a relentless war against bondage of every kind till the people can become really free. It will stand for political independence for India, so that a new state can be created in free India on the basis of the eternal principles of justice, equality and freedom. It will stand for the ultimate fulfilment of India's mission, so that India may be able to deliver to the world the message that has been her heritage through the past ages.

APPENDIX II

FORWARD BLOC—ITS JUSTIFICATION

(1-1-1941)

THE evolution of a Movement is analogous to that of a tree. It grows from within and at every stage it throws out new branches, so that there may be ever increasing progress. When no fresh branches sprout forth, the Movement may be presumed to be in a process of decay or death.

While every Movement draws its sustenance from the soil from which it springs, it also assimilates nourishment coming from outside—from the atmosphere, environment, etc. Internal sustenance and external nourishment are both necessary for a living Movement.

When the main stream of a Movement begins to stagnate, but there is still vitality in the Movement as a whole—a Left wing invariably appears. The main function of the Left Wing is to stimulate progress when there is danger of it being arrested. The appearance of a Left Wing is followed by a conflict between it and the main stream, which now becomes the Right Wing. This conflict is a temporary phase and through it a higher stage is reached, when the conflict is resolved. The solution of the conflict takes place through some sort of agreement or adjustment, whereby the Left Wing begins to dominate the Movement as a whole. Thus the Left Wing becomes, in time, the main stream of the Movement.

One may describe this process of evolution in philosophical language by saying that the "Thesis" throws up its "antithesis", and the conflict between the two is resolved in a "Synthesis". This "Synthesis", in its turn, becomes the "thesis" of the next stage of evolution.

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

This process of evolution—called the “dialectical process”—if properly comprehended, can give a new meaning and significance to the developments that have taken place within the Indian National Congress during the last few decades. We shall herein study the Gandhi Movement from the dialectical point of view.

We may observe at this stage that it would be an error to suppose that conflicts inside a Movement are unhealthy or undesirable under all circumstances. It would indeed be more correct to say that conflicts which arise from the logic of history are essential to progress, whether in the sphere of thought or in the sphere of action.

There is no fixed rule as to when a Movement or a particular phase of it should lose its dynamism and begin to stagnate. So long as it can assimilate from outside and go on creating something new, decay cannot set in.

To come now to a study of the Gandhi Movement. By 1919, after the close of the World War, a new situation arose in India and with it, new problems. The official Indian National Congress could not face this situation as it had lost its dynamism altogether, and a Left Wing was clearly necessary if the entire Congress was not to stagnate and die. At this juncture a Left Wing appeared in the form of the Gandhi Movement. Conflict ensued for a time and the old leaders were driven out of the Congress or voluntarily withdrew. Ultimately, a “Synthesis” took place. The Congress accepted the tenets of Mahatma Gandhi and the Left Wing then became the official Congress.

In 1920, Gandhism took possession of the Indian National Congress and for two decades it has maintained its hold. This has been possible, not merely because of Mahatma Gandhi’s personality but also because of his capacity to assimilate other ideas and policies. But for the latter factor, Gandhism would have ceased to dominate the Congress long ago. During its twenty years’ domination of

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

the Congress, whenever revolts appeared, the Gandhi Movement took the wind out of their sails by accepting many of their ideas and policies—and only recently has it shown signs of failing to adapt itself to the changing environment. For instance, when the Swarajya Party arose in 1923, the conflict that followed continued only for a time. At the Cawnpore Congress in 1925, the Swarajist policy of carrying non-cooperation inside the Legislatures was accepted by the Gandhiites and was thereupon adopted by the Congress as a whole.

Again in December, 1928, at the Calcutta Congress there was a revolt against Gandhism sponsored by the Independence League on the issue of Independence. Mahatma Gandhi then advocated Dominion Status and he fought and defeated our resolution on Independence. But a year later, at the Lahore Congress, he himself moved the resolution declaring that henceforth Independence was to be the goal of the Indian National Congress.

By this process of assimilation, the Gandhi Movement was able to maintain its progressive character and prevent the emergence of any big Left Wing development. There was a temporary setback after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March, 1931, but Gandhiji recovered lost ground when he launched Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience in January, 1932.

The failure of this Civil Disobedience Movement and its abandonment in May, 1933, created a new situation which gave birth to a fresh revolt—this time from the Right. Disappointed at the failure of the Movement, a large section of Gandhiites urged the revival of the parliamentary programme which had been scrapped by them at the Lahore Congress in December, 1929, before the launching of Satyagraha by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930. Gandhiji surrendered to this demand in 1934, ostensibly because he had no alternative plan for the Congress. This incident was an indication that stagnation in the Gandhi Movement had

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

set in and this was confirmed when, a big Left Wing revolt arose through the medium of the Congress Socialist Party which was inaugurated in 1934, almost contemporaneously with the swing towards parliamentarianism.

The Gandhi Movement did not lose its elasticity and adaptability in a day and the attitude of the Gandhites towards the Congress Socialists and other Leftists remained benevolent on the whole in 1934 and after. As a matter of fact, the Congress Socialists were offered seats on the Congress Working Committee in 1936, 1937 and 1938. (They did not accept the offer in 1938). In January, 1938, the Gandhites, at the instance of Mahatma Gandhi himself, supported my candidature for the Congress Presidentship. And at the Haripura Congress in February, 1938, when I was to nominate the Working Committee for the year, Gandhiji was clearly of opinion that there could be no objection to having Socialists on the Working Committee.

A distinct—and what has still remained inexplicable—change in Mahatma Gandhi's attitude came in September, 1938, after a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Delhi, at which there was a walk-out of the Left Wingers over a controversial issue. It was then that one heard Gandhiji saying that there could be no compromise with the Leftists in conducting the affairs of the Congress. A few months later, in January, 1939, he gave proof of the same mentality by opposing my re-election as Congress President.

Since September, 1938, Gandhism has tended to become increasingly static and hide-bound. At the Haripura Congress in February of the same year, the two most important resolutions passed were on the questions of Federation and the coming War. Though the resolution on Federation was one of uncompromising opposition, throughout that year the air was thick with rumours that negotiations for a compromise between the Gandhites and the British

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

Government were going on behind the scenes. My attitude of uncompromising hostility towards Federation was the first item in the Gandhian charge-sheet against my Presidentship. The second item was what the Gandhiites regarded as my unduly friendly attitude towards the Leftists. The third item in the charge-sheet was my sponsoring and subsequent inauguration of the National Planning Committee which, in the view of the Gandhiites, would give a fillip to large-scale production at the sacrifice of village industries, the revival of which was a very important item in the Gandhian constructive programme. The next charge against me was that I advocated an early resumption of the national struggle for Independence, to be preceded by an ultimatum to the British Government.

By September, 1938, any intelligent person could have foreseen that in future the relations between the Gandhiites and the Leftists would cease to be cordial. As already indicated above, Gandhiji himself gave a frank expression to the change in his mentality. Furthermore, it became clear to esoteric circles in the Congress at the time of the Munich Pact that in the event of a War-crisis overtaking India in the future—an open rupture between the Gandhiites and the Leftists would become unavoidable. It is true that from 1927 (Madras Congress) to 1938—the War-policy of the Congress was clearly enunciated in successive annual sessions of the Congress and one would not under ordinary circumstances have expected any divergence of opinion, not to speak of a rupture, among Congressmen on the war issue. Nevertheless, discussions among important Congress leaders during the international crisis preceding the Munich Pact left no room for doubt that the Gandhiites cherished no enthusiasm for the war-resolutions passed by preceding sessions of the Congress and they would not hesitate to circumvent them should they find it necessary or convenient to do so. Now the two questions on which

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

the Leftists were tremendously keen and on which they would not countenance any compromise were those of Federation and the coming War. Consequently, the vacillating and compromising attitude of the Gandhiites on these two issues presaged a breach between them and the Leftists in the days to come.

Though the Munich Pact staved off the war in Europe for the time being, students of International Politics could not but feel that the War was nevertheless unavoidable and imminent. The conviction began thereafter to grow within me that in view of the international situation, the British Government would give up the idea of forcing Federation down the throats of the Indian people. Federation being no longer a live issue for the Indians, it was necessary for them to decide about their future political plans. Since the much-expected battle royal on the Federation issue was off, how were they to continue the fight for Independence?

In November, 1938, when I began my North India tour, I put forward a solution of this problem. I urged that it was no use waiting for the Government to take the initiative against the Indian people. Federation being dead, at least for the time being, and war being ahead of us in the not-distant future, it was time for the Congress to take the initiative. The proper method for doing so would be to send an ultimatum to the British Government demanding Independence within a certain period and start preparing the country for a national struggle. This idea was widely propagated by us from November onwards and it came before the Tripuri Congress in March, 1939, in the form of a resolution—but it was defeated at the instance of the Gandhiites. That resolution stated, inter alia, that after the ultimatum was sent to the British Government, a period of six months would be given within which a definite reply was called for. Six months after the Tripuri Congress when war broke out in Europe, the political wisdom underlying

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

our resolution was admitted even by the Gandhiites who were so much against us at Tripuri.

Soon after War was declared in Europe, Mahatma Gandhi who was then the unofficial Dictator of the Congress, issued a public statement advocating unconditional co-operation with Great Britain in the prosecution of the War. The resolutions repeatedly passed by the Congress during a period of eleven years were conveniently forgotten. (Federation was officially postponed by the Government after the War broke out).

Since 1938, the issues on which we Leftists have found ourselves at loggerheads with the Gandhiites and on which no compromise has been possible—are the resumption of the national struggle for Independence and the correct war-policy of the Indian people. It is to be noted that till November, 1940, Mahatma Gandhi consistently declared in private and in public, that any Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience was out of the question and that anybody who launched such a movement would be doing harm to his country. It is true that in November, 1940, Individual Satyagraha was started under his auspices. But as Gandhiji himself has declared and as we all know very well, it is not a mass struggle for the attainment of Independence. As responsible British officials in India and in England have already declared, this movement has not embarrassed the British Government to any appreciable degree. In conformity with his desire that Great Britain should win the War, Mahatma Gandhi has refrained from creating an embarrassing situation for the Government which a mass struggle for winning Independence would naturally have done.

In September, 1939, Mahatma Gandhi advocated unconditional cooperation with Great Britain in the prosecution of the War, but in November, 1940, he demanded liberty to carry on anti-war propaganda. Since 1938, he

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

consistently denounced all attempts to resume the national struggle for Independence, but in November, 1940, he modified that stand so far as to actually launch the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement. Would it not be a moot-question to ask as to what could explain this change however small? And would it be wrong to say that this change has been due entirely to the pressure from the left?

That Gandhiji could, even at his present age, alter a position consistently and tenaciously advocated and upheld by him for a fairly long period—though this change may be due to pressure and be only partial—is evidence of his adaptability and mobility. Nevertheless it is not adequate for the needs of the times. We are now living in the "Blitzkrieg" period of history and if we do not move with the times, we shall have to go under. So far, Gandhiji has been unable to prove by his action that he can keep abreast of the times and lead his nation—and this accords with our belief which we have already stated that the Gandhi Movement is becoming static and hide-bound.

The uncompromising attitude towards heterodox thought which the Gandhites have been evincing since September, 1938, and their increasing desire and endeavour to expel dynamic and radical elements from the Congress—not only prove that they are losing their adaptability and mobility but will, like a vicious circle, make them more and more static. The various non-political organizations which Gandhiji has started for the Gandhites (*e.g.*, the All-India Spinners Association, the Gandhi Seva Sangh, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the All-India Village Industries Association, the Hindi Prachar Samity, etc.) will also undermine the political dynamism of the Gandhi Movement in future by creating non-political vested interests, as it has already been doing. And more than anything else, peaceful parliamentary life and ministerial office has been, and will be, the political grave of Gandhism.

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

Whatever revolutionary fervour the Gandhi Movement had, was sapped more by the acceptance of ministerial office than by any other factor. It would be no exaggeration to say that under the influence of this factor, a large number of Congressmen have definitely turned from the thorny path of Revolution to the rosy path of Constitutionalism. Congress Ministries in the provinces were formed in 1937 and neo-Constitutionalism reared its head in a menacing form within the Congress in 1938. Ever since then, the main task of Leftism has been to fight this "Frankenstein" created by the Congress itself. How to stem this drift towards Constitutionalism, how to create afresh a revolutionary mentality among the people in place of the neo-constitutionalist mentality, how to face the war-crisis in a bold and adequate manner, how to bring the Congress back to the path of uncompromising National Struggle and how ultimately to establish Leftist ascendancy in the Congress—these have been the main problems for the Leftists since 1938.

The Gandhi Movement today has become a victim of not only Constitutionalism but also of Authoritarianism. A certain amount of Authoritarianism is permissible and natural in a militant organization. But the excessive Authoritarianism that one finds today is traceable to the same cause as Constitutionalism. Since the acceptance of Ministerial office, the Gandhites have had a taste of power and they are anxious to monopolise it for themselves in future. What has been going on within the Congress of late, is "power politics", though of a sham kind. The fountain-head of this "power politics" is Wardha. It is the aim of this "power-politics" to beat down all opposition within the Congress so that the Gandhites may comfortably rule the roost for all time. But this game will not succeed. Real power has yet to come and it will never come if we travel along the safe path of Constitutionalism. It is certainly

possible for the Gandhiites to expel all discordant elements from the Congress and make it a close preserve. But that does not mean that they will be able to win liberty for India. And without real power, there cannot be real "power-politics". What we see therefore today is sham "power-politics".

Personally I would have no objection to the Gandhiites trying to monopolise power for themselves or acting in an authoritarian manner, if they had been a revolutionary force. But unfortunately, Gandhism has ceased to be revolutionary. There is no hope that it will succeed in carrying the nation towards its goal of national independence. Consequently, the more our Gandhiite friends try to consolidate their power, position and influence, the more stagnation they will bring into the Congress. Liberal doses of disciplinary action against non-conformists may make the Congress a more homogeneous body than at present, but that process will only create more enemies outside and in the end will strike at the "mass-basis" of the Congress and undermine the hold which the Congress has over the country at large.

The efforts of the Gandhiites to consolidate themselves is nothing else than "Right-consolidation" within the Congress. This had gone on slowly for a long time and unnoticed, till it was accentuated with the acceptance of Ministerial office. When the danger was detected and the Leftists began to organise in self-defence, a furore arose in Gandhian circles. For the latter, self-consolidation, *i.e.*, Right-consolidation, was right and natural; but Left-consolidation was a crime.

Ever since Gandhism has begun to stagnate and a big Left Wing has emerged in opposition to it, the Gandhiites have become Rightists and Gandhian-consolidation has come to mean Right-consolidation.

Philosophically speaking, Right-consolidation is the "thesis" which demands its "anti-thesis" in Left-consolidation.

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

Without this “anti-thesis” and the conflict following in its wake, no further progress is possible. All those who believe in progress and desire it, should therefore actively assist in this task of Left-consolidation and should be prepared for the conflict resulting therefrom. For bringing about Left-consolidation, the Forward Bloc was born in May, 1939, soon after a momentous Session of the All-India Congress Committee in Calcutta, at which I tendered my resignation of the office of President.

Left-consolidation could have been achieved in either of the following ways:—

(i) By forming one party and rallying all the Leftist elements therein. This, however, was not possible because several parties, claiming to be Leftists, already existed, and they were not prepared to liquidate themselves in favour of one Party.

(ii) By organizing a new Bloc which all Leftists and existing Leftist parties would join, while retaining the separate identity of their respective parties, if they so desired.

This was the first aim and endeavour of the Forward Bloc when it was launched. It did not want to start rivalry with the existing Leftist parties, nor did it want to undermine any of them. If the Bloc's proposal had been accepted and all Leftist parties had joined the Forward Bloc, while retaining their separate identity—Left-consolidation would have been easily and promptly achieved and the Rightists would have been faced with a formidable force. But unfortunately for the Leftist cause, this also was not possible, because some of the existing Leftist parties prohibited their members from joining the newly formed Forward Bloc. What accounted for this inexplicable attitude on the part of these parties, need not be discussed here.

(iii) In the above circumstances, a fresh attempt at Left-consolidation was made in the following manner. The

existing Leftist parties and the Forward Bloc agreed among themselves to form a new Committee to be called the Left-consolidation Committee. This Committee was to function as the organ of the entire Left—but it would act only when there was unanimity among the component elements of the Left-consolidation Committee.

The Left-consolidation Committee was formed in Bombay in June, 1939, and the effect was immediate and striking. For the first time, the entire Left presented a united and organised front at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee which was being held at the time. Though numerically in a minority, the Leftists were thereby able to prevent several changes being enacted in the Congress constitution, on which the Rightists were known to be very keen. That meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was a moral victory for the Leftists and on the surface, it seemed to augur well for the Leftist Cause.

But on the 9th July, 1939, the first blow at the Left-consolidation Committee was struck and by Mr. M. N. Roy. The Committee had decided to observe the 9th July as an All-India Day for protesting against two resolutions of an anti-Left character which had been passed by the All-India Congress Committee at its Bombay meeting in June in the teeth of Leftist opposition. The Congress President, Babu Rajendra Prasad, issued a statement in July calling upon Leftists to abandon the All-India Day on pain of disciplinary action. As a result of this threat, Mr. M. N. Roy made an announcement at the eleventh hour to the effect that his Party, the Radical League, would not participate, in the observance of the All-India Day. He also telegraphed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru requesting him to use his influence with the Congress Socialist Party and dissuade them from participating in the All-India Day. Since Mr. M. N. Roy was then looked upon as a Leftist leader and his Radical League was one of the component units of the Left-consolida-

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

tion Committee, his action amounted to a betrayal of the Leftist cause and was warmly acclaimed by the Rightists.

Though handicapped by the defection of the Radical League, the other members of the Committee carried on as usual, and their determination to hold together increased when the War situation overtook the country in September, 1939. But in October, a new crisis appeared when the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party announced in Lucknow that in future their Party would act on its own and would not follow the direction of the Left-consolidation Committee. Nevertheless, consultations between them and other members of the Committee continued for a time.

The next blow struck at the Left-consolidation Committee was in December, 1939, when a breach between the Forward Bloc and the National Front took place. The relations between the two had hitherto remained close and cordial. For instance, when the Anti-Imperialist Conference was held at Nagpur in October, on the eve of the meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha, the National Front enthusiastically participated in it, along with the Forward Bloc, Kishan Sabha and others, though the Congress Socialists from other provinces outside C. P. and Berar did not. And after the Congress Socialists withdrew from the L.C.C. later in October at Lucknow the Forward Bloc and National Front continued to collaborate. It was, however, brought to the notice of the Forward Bloc that the National Front had been carrying on propaganda against the former, while outwardly collaborating on the Left-consolidation Committee. What is more, it appeared that in an official journal of the National Front, an official article had appeared painting the Forward Bloc as a counter-revolutionary organization and adversely criticising it in many ways. This matter was brought up at a meeting of the leaders of the Bloc and of the National Front held in Calcutta in December, 1939. The latter refused to disown the above article or to

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

withdraw it. Thereupon they were told by the Forward Bloc leaders that a "counter-revolutionary" organization could not collaborate with the National Front on the Left-consolidation Committee.

The attitude of the National Front leaders showed that they wanted to use the platform of the L.C.C. for popularising their organization, while carrying on reprehensible propaganda, both secret and open, against the component unit of the Committee.

When the breach took place at Calcutta in December, 1939, the National Front openly informed the Forward Bloc that if a national struggle was launched by the latter independently of the Congress, the former would openly denounce it and resist it.

This breach was further accentuated by a conflict between the Bengal Branch of the Forward Bloc and of the National Front over some other issues.

Even before the Left Consolidation Committee was started, there was in operation something like a L.C.C. in Bengal. As a result, the Leftists were in an overwhelming majority in the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, the dominant partner in the Leftist Combination being those who later on joined the Forward Bloc when it was formed. The Leftist Combination naturally became stronger when the Left Consolidation Committee was started on an All-India basis.

After the 9th July, 1939, disciplinary action was taken against the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (*i.e.*, myself) by the Congress Working Committee for participating in the All-India Day. This was resented by all the Leftists in the B.P.C.C. including the National Front and a united protest was made by them. It soon became apparent that the above action of the Working Committee was but the beginning of a long chain of

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

unwarranted interference and persecution on the part of that Committee. All the Leftists in the B.P.C.C. then resolved not to submit meekly to the Working Committee but to continue their protest. After a few months, it became evident that the Working Committee was determined to go to any length, including the suspension of the valid B.P.C.C., and the setting up of an Ad Hoc Committee instead. At this stage the National Fronters in the B.P.C.C. began to show signs of weakness as well as reluctance to continue their attitude of protest against the high-handed action of the Working Committee. This was regarded by other Leftists as something like an act of betrayal in the midst of a grim fight and it looked as if the National Fronters were frightened at the prospect of disciplinary action. But the National Fronters wanted to cloak their real motive and they tried to side-track the issue by saying that instead of engaging in an organizational conflict with the Working Committee, the B.P.C.C. as a Leftist body should launch a struggle against the Government on the issue of Civil Liberty. The other Leftists were quite prepared to do this, but they wanted to continue their organizational protest against the Working Committee simultaneously. Ultimately, after a period of tension, an agreement was arrived at between the National Fronters and all the other Leftists in January, 1940, whereby the B.P.C.C. was to launch a struggle on the issue of Civil Liberty and the National Fronters were to join the other Leftists in continuing the protest against the Working Committee. Towards the end of January, 1940, the B.P.C.C. launched the movement as agreed upon and public meetings began to be held in defiance of the official ban. But after some time it was noticed that when the National Fronters held any public meeting, they did so after obtaining the permission of the authorities. In July, 1940, when the B.P.C.C. launched the Holwell Monument Satyagraha, not only did the National Fronters not join it—but some of them

actually opposed it. Furthermore, after the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh in March, 1940, when the Forward Bloc announced the launching of a nation-wide struggle, the National Fronters did their best to resist that move as well.

So much about participating in a struggle. With regard also to joining in the protest against the Congress High Command, the National Fronters did not fulfil their part of the agreement and they began to drop off. When the Working Committee in an unwarranted and illegal manner suspended the valid B.P.C.C. which had been dominated by the Leftists and set up an Ad Hoc Committee instead, the National Fronters quietly parted company with the other Leftists. The latter decided to ignore the fiat of the High Command and the valid B.P.C.C. continued to function. The National Fronters at first made a show of neutrality by declaring that they would not join either side. A little later, however, they began to apply to the Ad Hoc Committee for the recognition of their membership. Today they have cast off all sense of shame and openly declare that they cannot sever their connection with the Congress Working Committee.

The behaviour of the National Fronters in Bengal towards the Forward Blocers and other Leftists there, had repercussions in the All-India field and served to widen the breach between the two organizations which took place at Calcutta in December, 1939, on All-India issues.

After the events of December, 1939, all that remained of the Left Consolidation Committee was the Forward Bloc and the Kishan Sabha. Their collaboration became closer and closer with the passage of time. It was owing to their cooperation and initiative that the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference was held at Ramgarh, in March, 1940, contemporaneously with the annual session of the Congress and proved to be such a remarkable success.

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

The question may very well be raised as to why the Forward Bloc was at all started and why the existing Leftist parties were not charged with the responsibility of bringing about Left-consolidation. The experiment was in fact tried but it failed and then there arose a situation in which it became imperative to start the Forward Bloc, if the Leftists were to be rallied under one banner and the menace of Right-consolidation was to be countered.

With the formation of the Congress Socialist Party, Radical League and similar organizations in 1934 and after, and the decision of the National Front to join the Congress—the Leftists in the Congress began to gain appreciably in influence and in numbers. This continued till 1937 but in 1938 the process suffered a check and it was quite noticeable at the Haripura Congress in February, 1938. After Haripura, Leftists belonging to different parties began to put their heads together with a view to devising ways and means for increasing the Leftist strength. These efforts continued from February, 1938 to April, 1939. The proposal then was to form a Left Bloc and the Congress Socialist Party and the National Front were requested to take the lead in organising it. I took an active part in these efforts and many individuals like myself who had not till then joined any of the existing parties—pledged their support to the Leftist Bloc. Both the C.S.P. and the National Front at first took the idea of the Left Bloc with great enthusiasm, but they ultimately gave it up. Why they did so, remains a mystery to me up to the present day. Perhaps they thought that if the Left Bloc was organised and if it began to flourish—the importance of their respective parties would wane. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that if the Left Bloc had been launched in time, it would have taken the place of the Forward Bloc. The failure to start the Left Bloc belonged primarily to the C.S.P. and the N.F.

Now why did the existing parties fail to serve the

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

Leftist cause adequately and why was a new organization necessary? The answer evidently is that for some reason or other they failed to rally all those who should and could have been brought into the Leftist fold. Perhaps they were too keen on propagating Socialism—a thing of the future—whereas the immediate task was the widening and strengthening of the anti-imperialist front and an intensification of the anti-imperialist struggle. There was a large number of Congressmen who viewed with dismay the growth of Right-consolidation and the consequent drift towards Constitutionalism, following the acceptance of ministerial office in the provinces. They were naturally more interested in widening and strengthening the anti-imperialist front than in any thing else. It was with the help of these men that we could hope to resist the onslaught from the Right and establish Leftist ascendancy in the Congress. It had therefore been decided that the programme of the Left Bloc would be a minimum anti-imperialist programme, on the basis of which we could hope to rally all genuine anti-imperialists under one banner and give battle to the Rightists.

This was also our idea at the time we launched the Forward Bloc. Our immediate task was to fight the increasing drift towards Constitutionalism, reconvert the Congress into a revolutionary organization and bring it back to the path of national struggle and prepare the country for the coming War crisis.

Since its birth, the Forward Bloc has developed greatly, along with changes in the Indian political scene. But it has failed to bring other parties together on one platform, as originally intended. Does that mean that there is no hope of Left-consolidation? No. It only means that Left-consolidation will be achieved by some other means.

A word is necessary here as to what exactly is meant by Leftism. When different individuals and organizations

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

claim to be Leftists, how are we to decide who are—and who are not genuine Leftists ?

In the present political phase of Indian life, Leftism means anti-Imperialism. A genuine anti-imperialist is one who believes in undiluted independence (not Mahatma Gandhi's substance of independence) as the political objective and in uncompromising national struggle as the means for attaining it. After the attainment of political independence Leftism will mean Socialism and the task before the people will then be the reconstruction of national life on a Socialist basis. Socialism or Socialist reconstruction before achieving our political emancipation is altogether premature.

Genuine anti-imperialists *i.e.* Leftists have always to fight on two fronts. So also in India, they have to fight on one side, foreign Imperialism and its Indian allies, and on the other, our milk-and-water nationalists, the Rightists, who are prepared for a deal with Imperialism. Genuine anti-Imperialists should therefore anticipate persecution not only at the hands of the known agents of alien Imperialism but also at the hands of their Rightist friends—and at times it may be difficult to say which persecution is more severe and trying. In the case of present-day India, the Rightists will stoop to any degree of ruthlessness in their persecution of the Leftists, because they have had a taste of power and are determined to monopolise it for themselves in future by rooting out all opposition.

To carry on a struggle on two fronts simultaneously and to face the above two-fold persecution is not an easy affair. There are people who may stand up to one type of persecution at a time, but not to both. There are others who can stomach persecution at the hands of an alien Government, but who quail when it comes to a question of fighting their Rightist friends. But if we are genuine anti-

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

imperialists and want to function as such, we must muster courage to fight on a double-front and face all the persecution that may come our way.

In India we often come across people who pose as Leftists and talk big things, including Socialism—but who manage to shirk a struggle when they are confronted with it and spin out ingenious arguments for buttressing themselves. Thus we see pseudo-Leftists who through sheer cowardice avoid a conflict with Imperialism and argue in self-defence that Mr. Winston Churchill (whom we know to be the arch-Imperialist) is the greatest revolutionary going. It has become a fashion with these pseudo-Leftists to call the British Government a revolutionary force because it is fighting the Nazis and Fascists. But they conveniently forget the imperialist character of Britain's war and also the fact that the greatest revolutionary force in the world, the Soviet Union, has entered into a solemn pact with the Nazi Government.

Those who are prepared to face Imperialism but shrink from a clash with the Rightists, take shelter under a different argument. They hide their weakness under the plea of unity. But this is a specious plea which often results in self-deception. One should always distinguish between unity and unity—between the unity of action and the unity of inaction. And one should never forget that to talk of unity between those who are genuine anti-imperialists and those who are not—is mere moonshine. If unity under all circumstances is an end in itself, then why not establish unity between Congressmen and those who are outside the Congress or are against it? The argument of unity should not be carried beyond a certain point. Unity is certainly desirable, but only when there is agreement in principle and in policy. Unity at the sacrifice of one's principles or convictions is worthless and leads to inaction, while real unity is always a source of strength and stimulates activity.

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

To avoid a clash with the Rightists by putting forward the plea of unity is nothing but weakness and cowardice.

In the light of these observations it should be easy to decide who are, and who are not, genuine Leftists and as to whether the Forward Bloc has proved by its action and conduct to be a genuine Leftist organisation.

The question now is as to how Left-consolidation will ultimately be brought about. We have seen that three possible methods for achieving Left-consolidation have all failed. We also know that different individuals and parties have claimed to be Leftist. How then will the Left Movement develop in future?

The answer to this question is that the logic of history will determine who are the genuine Leftists. History will separate the chaff from the grain—the pseudo-Leftists from the genuine Leftists. When this elimination takes place, all the genuine Leftists will come together and fusion will take place. By this natural or historical process, Left-consolidation will be achieved. For this purpose, the acid-test of a fight on a double front is essential. Those who pass the test will be the genuine Leftists and they will all coalesce in time.

Since the Indians are a living nation, their political movement cannot die. And since stagnation has overtaken the Rightists, the logic of history demands a big Left Movement so that progress may continue. Conflict is bound to follow, but only for a time. Ultimately, Leftism will establish its supremacy over the entire political Movement of the land.

Since its inception, the Forward Bloc has been functioning as the spearhead of the Left Movement in India. Through its instrumentality, the Left forces have been gaining ground everyday and along with its ally, the Kishan Sabha; it will be largely responsible for bringing

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

about Left-consolidation in future. By waging a fearless fight on a double-front and by welcoming simultaneous persecution at the hands of alien Imperialism and of the Indian Rightists it has established its claim to be a genuine Leftist organization. It has therefore succeeded where other parties have failed.

The Forward Bloc is to the Left Movement what the Gandhiites are to the Right Movement. Philosophically speaking, the former may be regarded as the "anti-thesis" of the latter. Though the Forward Bloc has always desired to work in close cooperation with the Gandhiites on the anti-imperialist front, the differences between the two are deep and fundamental. Gandhiism envisages an ultimate compromise with Imperialism for Gandhian Satyagraha (or Civil Disobedience) must end in a compromise. But Forward Bloc will have no truck with Imperialism. Socially, Gandhiism is intimately linked up with the "haves"—the vested interests. As the "have-nots" are becoming class-conscious, as is inevitable, the breach between them and the Gandhiites is widening. One therefore finds that unlike what was the position twenty years ago, today Gandhiism does not appeal to large masses of the peasantry and factory workers, nor does it appeal to middle class youths and students, the vast majority of whom sympathise with the poverty-stricken masses. With regard to the future Gandhian ideas of post-struggle reconstruction which are partly medieval and partly anti-socialist are contrary to those of the Forward Bloc which has a thoroughly modern outlook and stands for Socialist Reconstruction.

Since its inauguration in May, 1939, the Forward Bloc has developed in its ideology and programme—and naturally too—but there has been no change in fundamentals, except that at the Second All-India Conference held at Nagpur in June, 1940, it was declared to be a party. Today, as it did yesterday, it stands for uncompromising national struggle

compromise. But Forward Bloc will have no truck with Imperialism. Socially, Gandhism is intimately linked up with the "haves" - the vested interests. As the "have-nots" are becoming class-conscious, as is inevitable, the breach between them and the Gandhists is widening. One therefore finds that unlike what was the position twenty years ago, today Gandhism does not appeal to large masses of the peasantry ^{and} factory workers, ~~nor~~ nor does it appeal to middle class youth and students, the vast majority of whom sympathise with the poverty-stricken masses. With regard to the future, Gandhian ideas of post-struggle reconstruction which are partly medieval and partly anti-socialist are contrary to those of the Forward Bloc which has a thoroughly modern outlook and stands for socialist reconstruction.

Facsimile of Netaji's handwriting.

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

for the attainment of Independence, and for the post struggle period, it stands for socialist reconstruction.

It would not be irrelevant to ask as to what the Forward Bloc has achieved so far and what potentiality it has for the future. Without indulging in exaggeration or in self-praise, we may make the following claim:—

- (1) It has saved the Congress from stagnation and death at the hands of the Rightists by building up a Leftist force. It has thereby fulfilled its historical role to a large extent.
- (2) It has served to stem the drift towards Constitutionalism, to create a new revolutionary mentality among the people and to bring the Congress back to the path of struggle, however inadequately. Today nobody will gainsay the fact that but for the Anti-compromise Conference held at Ramgarh in March, 1940, the Forward Bloc propaganda preceding it and the activities of the Bloc following it—Mahatma Gandhi would not have felt obliged to start the campaign of individual Civil Disobedience.
- (3) The analysis and the forecast of the War made by the Forward Bloc have been proved to be correct.
- (4) The propaganda and activities of the Forward Bloc have been responsible for inducing the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi to give the go-by to the original stand of the latter in September, 1939, with reference to the War and to return to the war-policy advocated by the Congress from 1927 to 1938.
- (5) In building up the Left Movement, the Forward Bloc has clarified the issues which separate the Left from the Right and has stimulated the intellectual and ideological progress of the Congress.
- (6) The Forward Bloc has been functioning as a watchdog for warning the Congress and the country

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

against any back-sliding on the part of any individual or party—particularly with reference to the major issues of the war-crisis and national struggle.

With reference to the future it may be confidently asserted:—

- (1) That the Forward Bloc will in the fulness of time succeed in establishing Leftist ascendancy in the Congress so that the future progress of the latter may continue unhampered.
- (2) It will prove to be the party of the future—the party that will give the proper lead in bringing the national movement to its fruition and will thereafter undertake the task of national reconstruction. Having sprung from the soil of India as a product of historical necessity and having at the same time the capacity to assimilate what is healthy and beneficial in the environment and in the world outside, it will be able to fulfil the dual role of conducting the National Struggle to its cherished goal and of building up a new India on the principles of liberty, equality and social justice.
- (3) It will, by fulfilling its proper role, restore India to her proper and legitimate place in the comity of free nations.
- (4) It will thereby enable India to play her historical role so that human progress may be taken a few stages beyond the point it has so far reached.

The ideas that are now uppermost in the minds of the members of the Forward Bloc at the present time may be summarised as follows:—

The Forward Bloc stands for:—

- (1) Complete National Independence and uncompromising anti-imperialist struggle for attaining it.
- (2) A thoroughly modern and Socialist State.

Forward Bloc—Its Justification

- (3) Scientific large-scale production for the economic regeneration of the country.
- (4) Social ownership and control of both production and distribution.
- (5) Freedom for the individual in the matter of religious worship.
- (6) Equal rights for every individual.
- (7) Linguistic and cultural autonomy for all sections of the Indian Community.
- (8) Application of the principles of equality and social justice in building up the New Order in Free India.

The Forward Bloc is a revolutionary and dynamic organization. As such it does not swear by copy-book maxims or by text-books of Politics or Economics. It is anxious to assimilate all the knowledge that the outside world can give and to profit by the experience of other progressive nations. It regards progress or evolution as an eternal process to which India also has a contribution to make.

Regarding the future career of the Forward Bloc we may confidently say that if it is the product of historical necessity, it will not die. If it has a philosophical justification, it will surely endure. And if it serves the cause of India, of humanity and of human progress, it will live and grow and no power on earth will ever destroy it.

Forward, therefore, and ever forward, my countrymen !

APPENDIX III

THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF INDIA

[THE PUBLISHER'S NOTE: *This article is part of a speech delivered by Netaji in November 1944 to the students of the Tokyo Imperial University. Netaji spoke on "some of the fundamental problems that face my country, both in the present as well as in the future". It envisages the free India, the free India as it should be. "It would be our task", said Netaji in that historic speech, "to evolve a system that would be a synthesis of the systems in vogue in different parts of the world."*]

I SPEAK to you on the fundamental problems of India. Having been a student of philosophy myself, I am naturally more interested in fundamental problems.

In my travels abroad, I have often found that people generally have a wrong and sometimes a rather funny idea about my country. For instance, among the people in Europe, the general idea about India is that it is a land in which three things can be found: snakes, fakirs and maharajas. Among those who have been influenced by British propaganda, the general idea about India is that it is a country where people are always fighting among themselves, and where the strong hand of Britain is required in order to maintain peace and order among the people.

If you approach the Orientalists in Europe, that is, the experts in Indology, you will find that they look upon India as a land of mystics and philosophers, a land which at one time produced a very rich philosophy, but which is to-day

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

as dead as the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Babylon are dead to-day.

Now the question is, 'What is India in reality?' No doubt we have a very ancient civilization, but unlike other ancient civilizations, such as Egypt or Babylon, Phoenicia or even Greece, the ancient culture and civilization of India is not dead. It still lives in the present. And we Indians of today think the same thoughts, fundamentally the same thoughts, and have the same feelings, the same ideals of life, as our forefathers who lived 2,000 or 3,000 years ago. In other words, there is a continuity, historical and cultural continuity, extending from the ancient times till the present day—which is in some ways a very remarkable thing in history. Now, in order to understand India, this fundamental fact should first be understood, namely, that the India of the past is not dead. India of the past lives in the present, and will live on in the future.

Against this background, this ancient background, we see changes in our national life from age to age. During the last 3,000 years, people have come into India from outside with new ideas, sometimes with new cultures. All these new influences, ideas and cultures have been gradually absorbed into the national life of India, so that in spite of the fact that, fundamentally we have the same culture and civilization as we had several thousand years ago, we have nevertheless changed and moved with the times. Today, in spite of our ancient background we are able to live in a modern world and adapt ourselves to that world.

Those who have been influenced, whether consciously or unconsciously, by British propaganda, have the impression that India was very easily conquered by the British and also that after the British conquest of India our country was for the first time politically unified. Both these notions are entirely wrong and without foundation.

In the first place, it is not true that India was easily

The Fundamental Problems of India

conquered by the British. It took the British 100 years, from 1757 to 1857, to finally subjugate India. Secondly, it is also an entirely wrong notion to think that India was politically unified by the British. The fact is that India was for the first time politically unified nearly 2,500 years ago, under the Buddhist Emperor, Asoka. In reality, the India of the time of Asoka the Great, was even larger than the India of today. Asoka's India included not only modern India, but also Afghanistan and a part of Persia.

After the time of Asoka, India has gone through many ups and downs in her national life. There have been periods of decay, followed by periods of progress and national upheaval. But throughout these ups and downs in our national life, we have been able, in the long run, to keep up our progress. About one thousand years after Asoka, India again reached the zenith of progress under the Gupta Emperors. This was followed by another glorious epoch in Indian history about nine hundred years later under the Moghul Emperors. Therefore, it is worth remembering that the British notion that we have been unified politically under British rule is entirely wrong. All that the British have tried to do during their regime in India is to divide the Indian people and to weaken, disarm and emasculate them.

I shall now present before you a problem which will interest scientists, and in particular, students of sociology. The question is whether the Indian people have any right to live as a free nation. In other words, have they the strength and the vitality left in them to live and to develop themselves as a free nation? I personally hold the opinion that if a nation once loses its vitality, its inner vitality, then it has no right to exist. And even if it does continue to exist after losing its vitality, that existence will have hardly any worth or value for mankind. The only reason why I stand for India's freedom and believe that as a free nation

we shall have a glorious future is that I believe that we have sufficient vitality left in us to live as free men and to develop as a nation.

Now, if I have to answer this question as to whether sufficient vitality is left in us, I shall have to answer two questions: firstly, has our nation any creative faculty and secondly, is it prepared to fight and to die in order to preserve its existence? These two tests have to be applied to India.

With regard to the first question, we have seen that in spite of the British in India, in spite of the innumerable restrictions and disadvantages which follow from foreign rule, we have been able during the century to give numerous proofs that in different departments of our national life we still have creative power.

The number of philosophers and thinkers produced in India under British rule, the number of writers and poets that enslaved India has produced, the artistic revival in India in spite of British rule, the scientific progress made by the Indian people in spite of so many difficulties in the way of their education, the standard already attained by our leading scientists as compared with scientists in different parts of the world, the industrial progress made by India as the result of her own effort and initiative and, last but not least, the distinction which we have attained in the field of sports, all these go to show that in spite of being politically subjugated the vitality of the nation has remained intact.

If under foreign rule and in spite of the obstacles and restrictions that follow from foreign rule, we could give so much proof of our creative faculty, then it stands to reason that when India is free and when the masses of the Indian people are afforded educational facilities, they will be able to give much better proof of their intellectual calibre and creative faculty in different walks of life.

The Fundamental Problems of India

I have just referred to the first test of a nation's vitality, namely, creative faculty. I shall now consider the second test, namely, as to whether the Indian people are able to fight and to die for the sake of freedom. On this point I should like to say, first of all, that, since the last great fight that they had with the British in 1857, the Indian people have not given up the struggle against the enemy even for one day.

Unfortunately, owing to what I would call the folly of our forefathers, after our final defeat in 1857, the leaders in those days had allowed themselves to be disarmed. Whatever difficulty we have subsequently experienced in winning back our freedom has been due largely to our having been disarmed. But though owing to the mistake of the leaders the people were disarmed, nevertheless they continued to fight for their freedom in other ways.

I shall not take up your time unnecessarily by giving a description of all the methods that have been used in India against the British. I will only say this, that all the methods that have been tried by revolutionaries in different parts of the world for the achievement of their own independence have been tried in India.

At the beginning of this century, particularly after the victory of Japan over Russia in 1904 and 1905, the freedom movement in India got a new impetus and since then, during the last 40 years, our revolutionaries have been studying very closely the methods of revolutionaries in other countries and they have tried to adopt as many of their methods as possible.

They have tried also to manufacture secretly arms and explosives inside the country and to use those arms and explosives for the achievement of Independence. As a development of this struggle for freedom, India tried a new experiment—Civil Disobedience—of which the best exponent was Mahatma Gandhi. Though personally I believe

that this method will not succeed in bringing us complete independence, there is no doubt that it has greatly helped to rouse and unify the Indian people and also to keep up a movement of resistance against the foreign government. I should, therefore, say that the fact that in spite of all the difficulties that result from foreign rule, a nation can produce a new method and practise that method with a large measure of success is also a proof of that nation's vitality. It shows that, that nation does not accept enslavement as a settled fact and is determined to struggle against it and to work out new methods for achieving independence.

I have, as a revolutionary, made a very close study of the revolutionary movements in other countries and I can say without any exaggeration that since 1857 we have used every possible method of revolutionary struggle. In the course of this struggle, tremendous sacrifices have been made and many have given their lives. There was, however, one method that still remained for us to take up and that was the organisation of a real modern national army.

That work we had not done up till recently because it was impossible to do that inside India under the eyes of the British army and the British police. But the moment this war gave the Indian people an opportunity of organizing a modern Indian national army outside India they at once seized it.

So my point is that throughout our revolutionary struggle against the British Government and their armed forces we have shown sufficient initiative, creative power and vitality and have made tremendous sacrifices. We now hope that under the conditions, and with the advantages that this war has given us, we shall be able, after all, to fulfil our national aspirations and win freedom for India.

Having replied to the question regarding the vitality of the Indian people and their right to live as a free nation, I shall now attempt a sociological analysis of modern India.

The Fundamental Problems of India

If you are to understand modern India, you have to take note of three important factors. The first factor is the ancient background, that is, the ancient culture and civilization of India, of which the Indian people of to-day are conscious, and of which they feel proud. The second factor is the struggle which has gone on without any break or interruption since we were finally overpowered by the British. And the third factor consists of certain influences which have come into India from outside.

Modern India is composed of this ancient background, the unbroken national struggle against Britain, and the impact of influences from abroad.

I shall now deal, in some detail, with the influences which have reacted on India from outside and which have been responsible, to some extent, in making modern India what it is today. Among these outside influence the first factor is the influence of Western thought which was crystallized in Liberalism, Constitutionalism, and Democrācy.

In other words, since 1857, modern liberal and democratic thought has been influencing the intellectuals of India to a large extent.

From the beginning of the present century, a new factor came into operation. After the victory of Japan over Russia in 1904-1905, the eyes of the Indian people were opened to a new movement in Asia, the movement for the revival, not merely of Japan—but along with Japan—of other Asiatic countries. Since then, Indian thought has been greatly interested in Asiatic revival. During the last 40 years we have been thinking not merely of what was happening inside India, but also of what was happening in other parts of Asia.

Another important factor which had influence on our mind consisted of the revolutionary struggles that have gone on in different parts of the world. Indian revolutionaries

studied the Resorgimento Movement in Italy under the leadership of Mazzini and Garibaldi and the struggle of the Irish people against their British oppressors. In Russia, before the last World War, there was, as you know, a movement against the Czar called the Nihilist movement. That also was studied. And nearer India the new awakening in China under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen was also studied very closely and with great interest by Indian revolutionaries.

Thus, Indian revolutionaries have been exceedingly receptive to the influences exerted by revolutionary struggles abroad. Then during the last World War, when the revolution broke out in Russia and, as a result of it, a new Government came into existence, the work of that Government was studied with great interest in our country.

People in India have not been interested so much in the Communist movement as in the work of reconstruction in Soviet Russia—in the rapid industrialization of that country and also in the way in which the Soviet Government solved the problem of minorities. It is this constructive achievement of the Soviet Government which was studied with great interest by people in our country. As a matter of fact, intellectuals like our poet Tagore, who had no interest in Communism as such, were profoundly impressed when they visited Russia in the work of educational reconstruction in that country. Then there is another influence which came to India from outside in more recent times—I mean, the new movement in Europe headed by Italy and Germany called Fascism or National Socialism. This movement was also studied by our revolutionaries.

I have just dealt with some of the influences that have reached India from different parts of the world, from England, France, Japan, China, Russia, Germany and so on. I will now take up another question, viz., as to how we have reacted to these influences—how much we have

The Fundamental Problems of India

accepted and how much we have rejected out of these outside influences.

In dealing with this question of our reaction to these outside influences, I must first point out that there is a big gulf between our generation and the last generation. As typical exponents of the last generation, I would like to mention Tagore and Gandhi. They represent for us the last generation, and between their thoughts and the thoughts and ideas of our generation there is a big gulf.

If you study the work of Tagore and Gandhi, you will find that all along there is a conflict in their minds as to what their reaction to Western influence should be. So far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned, he has never given us any clear solution of this problem. He has left people in doubt as to what his attitude is towards the acceptance of Western ideas. Generally speaking, his attitude is one of antagonism. But in actual practice he has not always acted in accordance with his own ideas, the reason being that the rest of his countrymen do not share that inner hostility or antagonism which Mahatma Gandhi personally has toward Western ideas and conceptions.

You all know about Mahatma Gandhi's attitude on the question of violence or physical force. He does not advocate the use of arms, or the shedding of the blood of the enemy for gaining one's freedom. This attitude toward violence or physical force is closely related to his general attitude toward foreign influence, particularly Western influence.

Our generation has followed Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of a political struggle, but has not accepted his ideas on all these questions. Therefore, it would be a mistake to take Mahatma Gandhi as the exponent of the thoughts and ideas of the present generation in India.

Gandhi is in some ways a complex personality, and I would like to analyse his personality, so that you may

understand him better. In Gandhi, there are two aspects—Gandhi as a political leader and Gandhi as a philosopher. We have been following him in his capacity as a political leader, but we have not accepted his philosophy.

Now the question arises as to how we can separate the two aspects. Why, if we do not accept his philosophy, are we following him? Though Gandhi has his own philosophy of life, he is a practical politician and, therefore, he does not force his own philosophy on the people. Consequently though we are following him in our political struggle, we are free to follow our own philosophy. If Gandhi had tried to thrust his philosophy on us we would not have accepted him as a leader. But he has kept his philosophy separate from his political struggle.

I have mentioned as representatives and exponents of the last generation Tagore and Gandhi. Now let us compare their philosophy. There are some points in which they agree, but in some other points they do not. The points on which they agree are firstly that they would like to see the national struggle being conducted without the use of arms. In other words, on the question of physical force they have the same views. On the question of the industrialization of the country they also have the same views. Both Tagore and Gandhi are against modern industrial civilization. But in the realm of culture, their views are not the same. So far as thought, art and culture are concerned, Tagore is prepared to accept foreign influence. He believes that in the realm of culture there should be full cooperation between India and the rest of the world and there should be reciprocity. We should not be hostile or antagonistic to the culture or art or ideas of any other nation. In the realm of culture, while Tagore advocates full cooperation between India and the rest of the world, Gandhi's general attitude is antagonistic to foreign influence. We must, however, remember that Mahatma Gandhi has

The Fundamental Problems of India

nowhere given a very clear exposition of his views. I am only referring to his general attitude on this question.

I have previously remarked that there is a big gulf between the fundamental thoughts and ideas of the last generation and of our generation. I will now explain what I meant thereby. As I have just said, this problem as to what our reaction should be towards foreign influence and towards industrial civilization troubled the leaders of the old generation all their lives and we see proofs of it in their actions. But this problem does not exist for us. It does not exist for us because our starting point is that we want a modern India based, of course, on the past. We do not believe that India can achieve freedom without the use of arms. Now once you take up this attitude, that for winning freedom we have to fight and to use arms, it follows that we must have modern industries to manufacture the arms. So we take our stand on modernism. We have to fight the enemy with modern methods and with modern arms—so we must have modern industries. What constituted the biggest problem for the old leaders constitutes our starting point. The problem for modern India is not our attitude toward modernism or foreign influence or industrialization, but how we are to solve our present day problems.

I believe that modern Japan will understand our generation much better than modern Japan understood the last generation in India. Our stand is virtually the same. We want to build up a new and modern nation on the basis of our old culture and civilization. For that we need modern industries, a modern army and all those things necessary to preserve our existence and our freedom under modern conditions.

I will now consider some of the problems of Free India. The moment India is free, the most important problem will be the organizing of our national defence in order to safeguard our freedom in the future. For that, we shall have

to build up modern war industries, so that we may produce the arms that we shall need for self-defence. This will mean a very big programme of industrialization.

After satisfying the need of our nation in the matter of self-defence, the next problem in the degree of importance will be that of poverty and unemployment. India today is one of the poorest countries in the world, but India was not poor before we came under British rule. In fact, it was the wealth of India which attracted the European nations to India. One cannot say that in the matter of national wealth or resources India is poor. We are rich in natural resources, but, owing to British and foreign exploitation, the country has been impoverished. So our second most important problem will be how to give employment to the millions of unemployed in India and how to relieve the appalling poverty which now exists among the masses of the Indian people.

The third problem in Free India will be the problem of education. At present, under British rule, about 90 per cent., of the people are illiterate. Our problem will be to give at least an elementary education to the Indian masses as soon as possible, and along with that to give more facilities to the intellectual classes in the matter of higher education.

Connected with the question of education is another problem which is important for India and that is the question of script. In India there are principally two scripts in vogue. One is the script known as the Sanskrit (or Nagri) script and the other is the Arabic (or Persian) script. Uptil today, in all national affairs and conferences we have been using both these scripts. I must add that in some provinces there are scripts in vogue which are modifications of the Sanskrit script. But fundamentally there are two scripts, and in all national affairs and conferences we have to use both these two scripts.

There is now a movement to solve this problem of

The Fundamental Problems of India

scripts by using the Latin script. I personally am an advocate of the Latin script. Since we have to live in a modern world, we have to be in touch with other countries and, whether we like it or not, we have to learn the Latin script. If we could make the Latin script the medium of writing throughout the country, that would solve our problem. Any way that is my own view and the view of my closest friends and collaborators.

I have referred to three important problems in Free India: national defence, how to remove poverty, and how to give education to the people. If we are to solve these three important problems, how are we going to do it? Shall we leave it to private agency and private initiative or will the State take up the responsibility of solving these problems?

Well, at present, public opinion in India is that we cannot leave it to private initiative to solve these national problems, especially the economic problem. If we leave it to private initiative to solve the problem of poverty and unemployment for instance, it will probably take centuries. Therefore, public opinion in India is in favour of some sort of a socialist system, in which the initiative will not be left to private individuals, but the State will take over the responsibility for solving economic questions. Whether it is a question of industrializing the country or modernizing agriculture, we want the State to step in and take over the responsibility and put through reforms within a short period, so that the Indian people could be put on their legs at a very early date.

But in solving this problem, we want to work in our own way. We will, naturally, study experiments made in other countries—but, after all, we have to solve our problems in an Indian way and under Indian conditions. Therefore, the system that we shall ultimately set up will be an Indian system to suit the Indian people.

Now if we do not tackle the economic question from the point of view of the masses, the majority of whom are poor, if we do not do that in India, we shall produce the same confusion or the same difficulties in our country, as we see in China today. You see in China today a split between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. Personally I do not see why this should have occurred or why, if the Kuomintang Party has the interests of the Chinese masses at heart, there should be any need to have a separate party like the Communist Party under foreign influence.

Having learnt from experience, we do not want to repeat the mistake that China has made. We actually find to-day that because the nationalist movement in our generation has identified itself with the interests of the masses, that is, of the workers and the peasants who form more than 90 per cent. of the people, because we have their interests at heart, there is no *raison d'être* for a separate party like the Communist Party. If the nationalists in India did not have the interests of the masses at heart, then you would have seen the same phenomenon as you see in China to-day.

Now we come to another question—namely, the political system or the Government. If we are to have an economic structure of a socialistic character, then it follows that the political system must be such as to be able to carry out that economic programme in the best possible way. You can not have a so-called democratic system, if that system has to put through economic reforms on a socialistic basis. Therefore, we must have a political system—a State—of an authoritarian character.

We have had some experience of democratic institutions in India and we have also studied the working of democratic institutions in countries like France, England and the United States of America. And we have come to the conclusion that with a democratic system we cannot

The Fundamental Problems of India

solve the problems of Free India. Therefore, modern progressive thought in India is in favour of a State of an authoritarian character, which will work as an organ, or as the servant of the masses, and not of a clique or of a few rich individuals.

That is our idea with regard to the political institution in Free India. We must have a Government that will function as the servant of the people and will have full powers to put through new reforms concerning industry, education, defence, etc., in Free India.

I should like to mention another point, namely, the attitude of Free India toward religion and caste. This is a question that is frequently asked. India has several religions. Consequently, the Government of Free India must have an absolutely neutral and impartial attitude toward all religions and leave it to the choice of every individual to profess or follow a particular religious faith.

With regard to caste, that is now no problem for us, because caste, as it existed in the old times, does not exist today. Now, what is the caste system? The caste system means that a community is divided into certain groups on a professional or vocational basis and marriage takes place within each group.

In modern India there is no such caste distinction. A member of one caste is free to take up any other profession. So, caste in that sense does not exist today. Then there remains the question of marriage. In the old times, it was the custom to marry within each caste. Nowadays, inter-marriage between the different castes takes place freely. Hence caste is fast disappearing. As a matter of fact, in the nationalist movement we never inquire as to what caste a man belongs to and we do not even know the caste of some of our closest collaborators, which shows that in our generation we do not think at all about caste. For Free India, therefore, caste is no problem at all.

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

In this connection, I should like to tell you that it was the British who created the impression throughout the world that we are a people quarrelling among ourselves, especially over religion. But that is an absolutely wrong picture of India. It may be that there are certain differences among our people, differences which we find in every other country. If we take the so-called progressive countries of the world, *e.g.*, France before the outbreak of the present war, or Germany before Hitler and his Party came to power, we will find that there were acute differences among the people in these countries. Spain had even a first class civil war.

But nobody ever says that, because the people in these countries had disputes and differences, they are not fit to rule themselves. It is only in the case of India that the British say that because there are certain differences among the Indian people therefore they are not fit to be free. Again, the fact is that whatever differences there are among the Indian people are largely the creation of the British Government. There are hundreds of examples to show you that throughout the history of British rule, the British have tried by every possible means to divide the Indian people. After having done so much to artificially create differences among the Indian people, the British turn around and say that we are not fit to be free.

I should also point out that if you take a modern Power like Soviet Russia, you will realize that if, in spite of this heterogeneous character, so many different races professing so many different religions could be unified in one political system and become such a strong Power, there is absolutely no reason why India which has much more homogeneity than the Soviet Union, should not be united as one nation. As a matter of fact, you will find that outside India, where there is no British influence, there are no differences among the Indian people. In the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia and in the Indian National Army there is no

The Fundamental Problems of India

question of religion or caste or class. It is just in India where the British have influence and control that you will find these differences.

I have already told you about the kind of economic and political system that we would like to have in Free India. Out of this arises the problem as to what our political philosophy is. On this question, I gave my own views in a book I wrote about ten years ago called "The Indian Struggle". In that book I said that it would be our task in India to evolve a system that would be a synthesis of the systems in vogue in different parts of the world. For instance, if you take the conflict between Fascism (or what you might call National Socialism) on the one side and Communism on the other, I see no reason why we cannot work out a synthesis of the two systems that will embody the good points of both. It would be foolish for any one to say that any one system represents the last stage in human progress. As students of philosophy, you will admit that human progress can never stop and out of the past experience of the world we have to produce a new system. Therefore, we in India will try to work out a synthesis of the rival systems and try to embody the good points of both.

Now I would like to compare some of the good points of National Socialism and Communism. You will find some things common to both. Both are called anti-democratic or totalitarian. Both are anti-capitalistic. Nevertheless, in spite of these common points, they differ on other points. When we see National Socialism in Europe to-day, what do we find? National Socialism has been able to create national unity and solidarity and to improve the condition of the masses. But it has not been able to radically reform the prevailing economic system which was built up on a capitalistic basis.

On the other side, let us examine the Soviet experiment based on Communism. You will find one great

achievement and that is planned economy. Where Communism is deficient is that it does not appreciate the value of national sentiment. What we in India would like to have is a progressive system which will fulfil the social needs of the whole people and will be based on national sentiment. In other words, it will be a synthesis of Nationalism and Socialism. This is something which has not been achieved by the National Socialists in Germany to-day.

There are a few points in which India does not follow Soviet Russia. Firstly, class conflict is something that is quite unnecessary in India. If the Government of Free India begins to work as the organ of the masses, then there is no need for class conflict. We can solve our problems by making the State the servant of the masses.

There is another point which has been over-emphasized by Soviet Russia and that is the problem of the working classes. India being predominantly a country of the peasants the problem of the peasants will be more important than the problem of the working classes.

Another point on which we do not fully agree is that, according to Marxism, too much importance is given to the economic factor in human life. We fully appreciate the importance of the economic factor which was formerly ignored but it is not necessary to over-emphasize it.

To repeat once again, our political philosophy should be a synthesis between National Socialism and Communism. The conflict between thesis and antithesis has to be resolved in a higher synthesis. This is what the Law of Dialectic demands. If this is not done, then human progress will come to an end. India will, therefore, try to move to the next stage of political and social evolution. I will now pass on to the last point in my address, and that is our conception of an international order. On this point I have already spoken several times in Tokyo. I fully support the steps

The Fundamental Problems of India

that have been taken through the Joint Declaration to create a new order in East Asia on the basis of freedom, justice and reciprocity. I have been personally greatly interested in international problems, having tried to work in several countries in order to get support for our movement and, in that connection, I also had the opportunity of studying the work of the League of Nations.

The experiment of the League of Nations has failed, and it is desirable and profitable for us to investigate as to why it failed. If I were to answer that I would say that it failed because the sponsor nations were too selfish and short-sighted. The sponsor-nations were England, France and America. America dropped out of the League, so the Powers that controlled the League were England and France. Now these two leading Powers, instead of setting an example of unselfishness, tried to use the League of Nations for their selfish interest and for their own benefit. The only basis on which we can set up an international order is freedom, justice and reciprocity. Therefore, the work in East Asia has commenced on the right lines and on the right basis. The only task that remains for us is to see that in actual work the principles embodied in the Joint Declaration are put into effect. If they are so put into effect, then the experiment will be a success. If not, then it will again prove to be a failure.

The success of this experiment will depend on the example set by the sponsor nation. The League of Nations failed, because the sponsor nations were selfish and short-sighted. This time if the nations that have joined together, and particularly the sponsor nation, avoid a selfish and short-sighted policy and work on a moral basis, then I see no reason why the experiment should not be a success.

I should like to emphasize again the tremendous responsibility which Japan has undertaken by becoming the sponsor nation in this task. And when I talk of the respon-

The Indian Struggle 1935-42

sibility of the nation I want also to stress the responsibility of the youths. The youths of today will be the nation and leaders of to-morrow. An idea that is welcomed and supported by the youth will one day be supported by the whole nation. But an idea which does not find support among the youths will die a natural death. Therefore, their responsibility for making this new order a success devolves, in the last analysis, on the youths of this country. I hope and pray that the students who are the future representatives of the nation will realize the tremendous moral responsibility which Japan has undertaken in initiating this new order.

There may be people who doubt whether a nation can rise to a high moral level, whether a nation can be far-sighted and unselfish and undertake the work of establishing a new order. I have every faith in mankind. If it is possible for one individual to be unselfish, to live one's life at a high moral level, I see no reason why an entire nation cannot also rise to that level. In the history of the world we have seen examples in which a revolution has changed the mentality of a whole nation and made it rise to a high level of morality. Therefore, if anybody has any doubt whether an entire nation can rise to that level, then I do not share that doubt.

I repeat, in conclusion, that the sponsor nation should realize the tremendous responsibility that it has undertaken. This is a task not only for the leaders and the politicians, but for the whole nation and especially for those who are the hopes of the nation--the youths and the students.

the fateful years 1935 to 1942. Here is an opportunity of reading and learning history in company with India's NETAJI—the acknowledged Leader of Indian Revolution. This is an opportunity that no student of history can afford to miss.....

And—what is more—NETAJI outlines in this great work the ultimate mission that he set out to fulfil and the roads leading to that goal. He portrays the imposing finale of the great Indian drama—that "of building up a new India on the principles of liberty, equality and social justice", so that, "India may be able to deliver to the world the message that has been her heritage through the past ages.....

This, therefore, is a book that is indispensable for all those who are interested in India,—her past, her present and her future.....

